TRANSLATION

OF SEVERAL

PRINCIPAL BOOKS, PASSAGES, AND TEXTS

OF

THE VEDS,

AND OF

SOME CONTROVERSIAL WORKS

ON

BRAHMUNICAL THEOLOGY.

BY

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

Memorial Edition.

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OF

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

WITH

A PREFACE

BY

Miss MARY CARPENTER.

[Reprinted from Last Days in England of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.].

PREFACE

BY MISS MARY CARPENTER.

THE following letter from Ram Mohun Roy himself first appeared in the *Athenaeum*, and in the *Literary Gazette*; from one or other of which it was copied into various newspapers. It was written just before he went to France. It was probably designed for some distinguished person who had desired him to give an outline of his history; and he adopted this form for the purpose. The letter may be considered as addressed to his friend Mr. Gordon of Calcutta.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In conformity with the wish, you have frequently expressed, that I should give you an outline of my life, I have now the pleasure to give you the following very brief sketch.

My ancestors were Brahmins of a high order, and from time immemorial, were devoted to the religious duties of their race, down to my fifth progenitor, who about one hundred and forty years ago, gave up spiritual exercises for worldly pursuits and aggrandisement His descendants ever since have followed his example, and, according to the usual fate of courtiers, with various success, sometimes rising to honour and sometimes falling ; sometimes rich and sometimes poor; sometimes excelling in success, sometimes miserable through disappointment. But my maternal ancestors, being of the sacerdotal order by profession as well as by birth, and of a family than which none holds a higher rank in that profession, have up to the present day uniformly adhered to a life of religious observances and devotion, preferring peace and tranquillity of mind to the excitements of ambition, and all the allurements of worldly grandeur.

In conformity with the usage of my paternal race, and the wish of my father, I studied the Persian and Arabic languages,—these being indispensable to those who attached themselves to the courts of the Mahommedan princes ; and agreeably to the usage of my maternal relations, I devoted myself to the study of the Sanskrit and the theological works written in it, which contain the body of Hindu literature, law and religion. When about the age of sixteen, I composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of the

idolatrous system of the Hindoos. This, together with my known sentiments on that subject, having produced a coolness between me and my immediate kindred, I proceeded on my travels, and passed through different countries, chiefly within, but some beyond, the bounds of Hindoostan, with a feeling of great aversion to the establishment of the British Power in India. When I had reached the age of twenty, my father recalled me, and restored me to his favour; after which I first saw and began to associate with Europeans, and soon after made myself tolerably acquainted with their laws and form of Government. Finding them generally more intelligent, more steady and moderate in their conduct, I gave up my prejudice against them, and became inclined in their favour, feeling persuaded that their rule, though a foreign yoke, would lead more speedily and surely to the amelioration of the native inhabitants; and I enjoyed the confidence of several of them even in their public capacity. My continued controversies with the Brahmins on the subject of their idolatry and superstition, and my interference with their custom of burning widows, and other pernicious practices, revived and increased their animosity against me; and through their influence with my family, my father was again obliged to withdraw his countenance openly, though his limited pecuniary support was still continued to me.

After my father's death I opposed the advocates of idolatry with still greater boldness. Availing myself of the art of printing, now established in India, I published various works and pamphlets against their errors, in the native and foreign languages. This raised such a feeling against me, that I was at last deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends, to whom, and the nation to which they belong, I always feel grateful.

The ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that of opposition, to *Brahminism*, but to a *perversion* of it; and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmins

Was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities which they profess to revere and obey. Notwithstanding the violence of the opposition and resistance to my opinions, several highly respectable persons, both among my own relation and others, began to adopt the same sentiments.

I now felt a strong wish to Visit Europe, and obtain, by personal observation, a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion, and political institution. I refrained, however, from carrying this intention into effect until the friends who coincided in my sentiments should be increased in number and strength. My expectations having been at length realised, in November, 1830, I embarked for England, as the discussion of the East India Company's Charter was expected to come on, by which the treatment of the Natives of India, and its future government, would be determined for many years to come, and An Appeal to the King in Council, Against the Abolition of the Practice of Burning Widows, was to be heard before the Privy Council; and his Majesty the Emperor of Delhi had likewise commissioned me to bring before the authorities in England certain encroachments on his rights by the East Indian Company. I accordingly arrived in England in April, 1831.

I hope, you will excuse the brevity of this sketch, as I have no leisure at present to enter into particulars, and

I remain, &c,

RAMMOHUN ROY

A SKETCH

OF THE LIFE

OF

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.

BY

BABU DINA NATH GANGULI.

[A Reprint.]

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

RAM MOHUN ROY was born at Radhanagore in the Hughly District in Bengal in May, 1772. His father's name was Ram Kanta Roy, and the name of his mother was Tarini Devi.

Ram Kanta was at first in the service of the Nawab of Moorshidabad, but the ill-treatment he received from some of the officers of the Nawab's Court forced him to give up his appointment. He then came to Krishnagore, and undertook the management of some estates in that district belonging to the Maharaja of Burdwan. His wife was a, lady of good parts, and she helped Ram Kanta in the management of his affairs.

Ram Kanta was a Vaishnava; and both he himself and his wife Tarini Devi were of a religious turn of mind; and their piety exerted not a little influence upon the character of their illustrious son.

When about five years old, Ram Mohun showed his eagerness to obtain a knowledge of things. Noticing this, his eldest brother, Jaga Mohun, undertook to educate him. After some time, Ram Mohun returned to his parents, and his father sent him to a *Pathshala,* where he made some progress in Bengali. But, as the knowledge of Persian was indispensable at that time, Ram Mohun was sent to Patna, where he learnt Persian and Arabic. The education he thus received gave him an insight into the works of Aristotle and Euclid as also of some of the great men of Persia and Arabia. After a couple of years, Ram Kanta sent his son to Benares to study Sanskrit. In a short time, Ram Mohun became

well versed in the literature of his people, notably the *Upanishads.*

Rani Mohun then returned to Radhanagore. The religious education he had received made him an admirer of the ancient religion of the Hindus, but it shook his faith in the popular ceremonialism of his countrymen.

Ram Kanta came to know of it and became displeased with his son. The publication of a book against idolatry, at this time, irritated Ram Kanta so much that he expelled Ram Mohun from his house. Ram Mohun was then in the 16th year of his age. Going on a travel through the country, he visited several places of India and went to Thibet also. During his travels, he learned several dialects and collected information in connection with the religious practices of the people.

The solicitations of his wife induced Ram Kanta to take Ram Mohun back into the family. Ram Mohun renewed his attacks against the religious practices of the time, which roused the ire of Ram Kanta once more, and Ram Mohun was expelled from the family a second time. After the death of Ram Kanta, Tarini Devi, however, brought back Ram Mohun into the family. Ram Kanta left some property one-third of which fell into Ram Mohun's share.

In the year 1800, Ram Mohun took service under Government. His first employment was that of a clerk in the Rungpore Collectorate. He was afterwards promoted to the rank of Sheristadar. In the 22nd year of his age, Ram Mohun commenced to study English, and when 28 years old, he used to speak English tolerably well, but could not write in it. John Digby, the Collector, was a lover of literature, and coming to know of the studious habits of Ram Mohun, he helped him in his studies of the English language. During his stay at Rungpore, Ram Mohun carried on religious controversies with the Pandits, wrote some tracts in the Persian language, and translated portions of the Vedanta. In addi-

tion to these, he used to hold religious conferences* every evening at his residence. Some of the residents of the place used to attend these conferences, though most of them were ranged against him. Ram Mohun served Government for about 14 years. In the year 1813, he retired from the service with a view to find more time than what he could have at his disposal as a servant of the Government, for his religious work.

Leaving Government service, Ram Mohun came to pay his respects to his mother. On arrival, Ram Mohun was pained to hear of the death of his two brothers. He remained at home for some time. But his attacks against the popular religion of his countrymen by means of pamphlets and controversies with the Pandits, roused the ire of the Hindus, and they began to persecute him. He bore this with patience, and continued to do good to those who treated him as their enemy. The doings of Ram Mohun displeased Tarini Devi very much, and moreover, her neighbours spoke to her disparagingly of her son's doings. She was therefore obliged, to request Ram Mohun to quit her house.

Ram Mohun went to Rughoonathpore with his family He built a house there, and lived in it. But, soon after, it became apparent to him that the mission of his life could not be carried out from an obscure village. He therefore removed to Calcutta. Ram Mohun was then in the fortieth year of his age. Here his two sons and a relation of his lived with him. It may be mentioned here that, after giving up his service, Ram Mohun lived at Moorshidabad for a short time. Here he wrote a pamphlet against idolatry, in the Persian language named Tuhfatool Muwahhiddin.

Ram Mohun now commenced his work in a systematic manner. He carried on debates with the Hindu Pandits and the Christian Missionaries, and published several pamphlets advocating the cause of monotheism. Among his earliest works were a translation of the *Vedanta Sutras* and the

Vedanta Sara by which he made his mark as a Sanskrit Scholar and dialectician. It was his object to show the hollowness of the system of worship prevalent at the time, and to lead his erring countrymen to the sublime religion of the ancient sages of India.

Some of the eminent men of Calcutta acknowledged the abilities of Ram Mohun, and appreciated his work; but most of his countrymen were against him. The Brahmins of the day considered themselves to be the gods of the people, and they kept out of their sight the sacred books of the Hindus. Ram Mohun published them with translations, one after another, and he pointed out to his countrymen the truth of the monotheistic teachings of their scriptures. But they could not appreciate his work or grasp his ideals, and so became inimical to him. The Pandits of the day published pamphlets with the object of refuting the arguments adduced by Ram Mohun. These pamphlets were replete with revilings and vituperations. Ram Mohun bore them with patience. His replies were uniformly courteous.

Catholicity marked Ram Mohun's career. His researches were not confined to the Hindu Shastras alone. He studied Koran in Arabic, the old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. The precepts of Jesus pleased him so much that he published them in the year 1820 in the form of a book named, *The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness.* Our countrymen might infer from this that Ram Mohun valued these precepts more than those contained in the Hindu Shastras. But such was not the case. When asked by a friend, Ram Mohun said, that the Vedas contained the same lessons of morality, but in a scattered form.

The book referred to, described Jesus as a religious teacher, but not as a Divine Being. This irritated the Christian missionaries of Bengal, especially Dr. Marshman, who was then the editor of the *Friend of India.* He wrote

an article in support of the divinity of Jesus. Ram Mohun defended his position in his *Appeals to the Christian Public,* which appeared in pamphlet forms.

After this, several controversies took place between Ram Mohun and the Christian preachers of Serampore and Calcutta. Ram Mohun started a diglot periodical, in English and Bengali, called the *Brahmunical Magazine* to defend the religious books of the Hindus. In a separate pamphlet, he showed the futility of the Christian doctrine of Trinity; and in the controversy he carried on with Dr. Tytler, he proved that there was no difference between the idolatry of the Trinitarians and that of the Hindus, In connection with these controversies, it is worthy of note that the Rev. W. Adam, a Trinitarian Christian Missionary, who had come to India to propagate evangelical Christianity, endeavoured to bring to Ram Mohun over to bis religion; but the arguments' of Ram Mohun convinced him that the doctrines of Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, and Atonement by the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus, were against the teachings of the Bible; and the Missionary renounced Trinitarianism and became a Unitarian Christian.

In the second year of his residence in Calcutta, Ram Mohun formed a Religious Association at his house, called the Atmya Sabha. At this Association, the Vedas used to be recited and Hymns sung. This Association developed into* the Brahmo Somaj in the month of August of the year 1828. The Meetings of the Somaj used to be held at a house hired for the purpose. Many of the Hindus of Calcutta attended them. a short time, funds were collected, and a building was erected to which the Somaj was removed on the n t h day of *Magh* (January) of the year 1830.

At this time, Ram Mohun met with some domestic calamities. His mother breathed her last. Soon after, his second wife 3eparted from this life, and this was followed by the death of one of his grandsons.

After placing the Brahmo Somaj on a firm footing, Ram Mohun turned his attention to the cause of social reform. The prevailing practice of *Sutti* was the first work he took in hand. He wrote several papers on the subject. The waitings of Ram Mohun attracted the attention of Lord W, Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India, who sent for Ram Mohun and had frequent conference with him on the subject. The Government became convinced of the desirability of putting a stop to the cruel practice ; and at last, on the 4th of December, 1829 A. D., an enactment was passed abolishing the rite. This caused a great commotion among the Hindus. An association called the Dharma Sabha was established by the prominent Hindus of Calcutta, who made an Appeal to the Throne against the Sutti Act.

At this time, Ram Mohun started a weekly periodical in Bengali, named *Sambada Kaumadi.* Its objects were to inculcate the principles of higher Hinduism, and to advocate the cause, of the general welfare of India. The Dharma Sabha published a counter periodical, named *Chandrika;* and a hot discussion was carried on, through the medium of these two periodicals, between Ram Mohun and the members of the Dharma Sabha. Failing to overcome Ram Mohun by arguments, the latter took sinister steps to thwart the objects of the Brahmo Samaj. The Secretary of the Sabha went from house to house to lay malicious charges against Ram Mohun and his followers, and the Sabha threatened those who attended the Samaj with excommunication from Hindu Society. At last, matters came to such a pass that some plans were discovered even against the life of Ram Mohun.

Nothing daunted, Ram Mohun continued to work for the good of his country with unabated zeal. He wrote papers against polygamy, kulinism and the restriction of widow-marriage, always basing his case on the authority of the Shastras. In addition to religious and social reformation, Ram Mohun did much towards the diffusion of English

knowledge and the improvement of vernacular literature He encouraged female education also. Politics also occupied the attention of Ram Mohun. He started a periodical in the Persian language in which he published articles *on* poliitics for the perusal of both his Hindu and Mahdmedan country-men. In fact; Ram Mohun did everything in his power for the welfare of his country.

It now became necessary for Ram Mohun to pay a visit to England. A discussion was to take place in England about the New Charter of the East India Company and the Appeal from the Dharma Sabha against the Sutti Act was to be heard; A favourable opportunity also presented itself. The Ex-Emperor of Delhi had a complaint to lay before the Throne of England, and he offered to send Ram Mohun as his Envoy to the British Court. ' He placed funds in his hands and honoured him with the title of Raja.

Ram Mohun started for England on the 15th of November, 1830, accompanied by Raja Ram, an orphan, Ramruttun Mookerji and Ram Hurry Dass. The vessel landed* at its destination on the 8th of April, 1831. Ram Mohun went to Liverpool the same day. The fame of Rani Mohun had preceded him to England and all the eminent men of the place came seeking the acquaintance of the great Brahmiri reformer.

The Rajsi was presented to his Majesty Wiliiam the fourth by Sir j. C. Hothouse, the then President of the Board of Control, and the British Public did him great honor during his stay in England. On the occasion of the King's Cordriation, a place was given him among the Ambassadors of the different European Nations When a grand dinner wa9 given to the public on the occasion 6f the opening of the London Bridge, Ram Mohun was invited to it, and on the 6th of July, a dinner was given in his honor at the London Tavern.

All classes of the people of England honoured Rani

Mohun. The Unitarian Association welcomed him and he attended several meetings of that body of Christians.

During his stay in England, Ram Mohun did much for the good of his countrymen. He placed before the Commitee of the House of Commons, which sat in the years 1831 and 1832 to deal with Questions relating to India, interesting papers on the subjects discussed and gave his evidence before it.

When the Appeal against the Sutti Act was heard in Parliament, Ram Mohun presented in person the Petitions in support of the Act, he had brought with him ; and he had the satisfaction of seeing the rejection of the Appeal on the nth of July, 1832.

Towards the end of 1831, Ram Mohun went to France. Here he studied the French language. During his stay in that country, he was introduced to the French King, Louis Phillippe, and had the honour of dining with him twice. The eminent men of France also honoured him. The Society Asiatique elected him as an honorary member.

Ram Mohun wished to be present in London at the time of the discussion of some important questions in Parliament,, and he repaired thither in February, 1833. On his arrival, he was invited by Dr. Carpenter and other friends to visit Bristol: but the important work he had to do detained him in London for some months longer. He remained there till the passing of the Indian Bill.

It may be mentioned here that, during his stay in London, Ram Mohun published translations of several religious works of the Hindus, and carried on religious discussions with several eminent men. He published also several papers relating to Indian administration. He wrote also particulars of his voyage and travels : but there is nothing to show what became of them.

Ram Mohun repaired to Bristol in September, 1833. He

was accommodated in a house at Stapleton Grove, a village near Bristol with Mr. John Hare and Miss Hare.

On the 19th of September, Ram Mohun had an attack of fever. Miss Hare attended him. The disease took a serious turn. Every care was taken of him, and the best doctors of the place attended him. But their efforts proved abortive. The Raja expired on the 27th of September, 1833. His body was interred on the 18th of October, 1833, at a spot in a shrubbery, near the lawn under some elms.

The news of this sad event spread throughout Europe and America and the eminent persons of these Continents mourned the loss which the world in general, and India in particular, sustained. England felt the loss greatly; several Churches held Special Services in commemoration of the great man, and Hymns, invoking blessings on the spirit of the departed, were sung at the close of Sermons. Some ladies composed Poems as Tributes to his Memory.

We conclude this Sketch with the following lines taken from a life of the Raja:—

" But whilst ail this was passing in the West, India knew not what had befallen her. Just like girls, who fee] a great pleasure in the marriage of a male with a female one, not knowing what real marriage is, the enjoyments of the sons of India were centred in the decoration and worship of idols, not comprehending the Great Being these symbols were intended to typify, and it is no wonder that they should fail to appreciate the worth of the great man who tried to take away the veil of ignorance that had enveloped the light of truth."

MAHARSHr DEVEDNRA NATH TAGORE'S

REMINISCENCES

OF

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

[A REPRINT]

CALCUTTA:

1896.

MAHARSHI DEVENDRA NATH TAGORE'S REMINISCENCES.

THIS venerable old man, the honored leader and hoary-headed patriarch of the Brahma Sama], has just passed his eightieth year. But the enormous strain that the work of the Brahma Samaj had put upon him in his earlier days, the incessant anxiety for its life and development that he felt during one of the most critical periods of the history of this great movement, when the seed that had been sown by Raja Ram Mohun Roy showed' lamentable signs of decay and death, has left its deep mark upon the constitution o£ Devendra Nath Tagore, who looks, therefore, immensely older and more infirm than even a Bengali octogenerian. He can hardly use his eyes or ears; and has to be talked to in the highest pitch of one's voice, and even then he understands the meaning of the speaker more by the power of his keen intelligence than that of his ear.

It was a very fine morning, such as mornings usually are in Bengal, in September and October, when we went to see the Grand Old Man of the Brahma Samaj. He lives in a two-storied house situate in one of the neatest and quietest part of Calcutta. His old family-dwelling house is located about the most densely-populated portion of Calcutta. But the Maharshi does not live there. He has been living away from his large family since many years now. His eldest son, a widower,—one of the few original thinkers that Bengal has produced in this century, lives with him, and a grandson also[1] lives here with his family, to generally look after the Grand Old Man, When we called, Maharshi Devendra Nath had not as yet come out of his bed-room. Generally he gets up very early, between three and four o' clock in the morning,

and having performed his ablutioris and morning devotions, he goes out for a drive at about half past seven and returns at eight, after which visitors are received. A slight attack of rheumatism, however, does not allow him now to go out for the morning drive. But as his limbs have to be fomented every morning, he cannot get out of bed before 7-30 or 8; This morning, some ladies belonging to the orthodox section of the community had called. Devendra Nath is regarded by most people as a saint and seer, and even many orthodox people of both sexes go to pay their respects to and receive the blessings of this Grand Old Saint of the Brahma Sama]. The Indies, of course, had precedence of us; and it was therefore: nearly half past eight o' clock when we were ushered into his presence. He was seated on a chair, in the southern veranda, on the second storey. A small marble tray stood on his right, and a few chairs lay arranged in two parallel rows to his right and left. On the tray there were a beautiful camellia, just unfolding its virgin sweetness, and the Maharshi's white handkerchief.

As we went up to him and made our obeisance to him, in the reverential method of our people, by touching his feet, our name was called out by a friend, Pandit Priya Nath Shastri, one of the Ministers of the Adi-Brahma Samaj, and a most beloved disciple of the Maharshh The venerable old man stretched out his hand, and, as it would appear to one not acquainted fully with the ways and ideas of the Maharshi, Shook hands with us. But he did not really shake hands with us. Me does not like Western manners and European ideas in these matters; What he did was simply to feel our hands, as he himself presently explained to us. Asking us to sit by him, he said :—

" I am, you see, like a caged bird eager to fly away to its native sky. This is not my country, I belong to that grander and purer region, and am eagerly waiting to go there. I do not see: you with my eyes, but I can understand and know'

you by my inner light. I therefore seek your touch. I can know you from your touch But I have not lost anything through loss of sight or hearing. For I find that in proportion as these external organs of knowledge grow weak, the power of spiritual perception grows strong. But still I have to devote a great deal of time to nursing my body* I am just now undergoing some electric treatment. I got up before 4 o'clock, and had to spend a good deal of time in putting this disordered frame to proper order. I must do these things. It is His order. I can't take my usual airing now, except His air."

The Maharshi talks like a child,—talks on continually in his own strain, without waiting to be asked any questions; and one must use some tact in drawing him out on any particular topic. So, as soon as he finished the last sentence, we cried out to the topmost pitch of our voice that the Anniversary of the Death of Raja Ram Mohun Roy was close upon us, and that we were making the needful arrangements for the purpose* The conversation immediately turned on Raja Ram Mohun Roy. The Maharshi said;—

" I used to go very frequently to Raja Ram Mohun Roy's garden-house. It was in Maniktola. I was a student in Ram Mohun Roy's School at *Hedua* (Cornwallis Square). His son Rama Prasad was a class-mate of mine, and I used to go to see him with Rama Prasad, almost every Saturday, after school hours. The Raja had a swinging cot hanging from one of the trees in his garden—»Rama Prasad and I would swing there. Sometimes the Raja would come and join us, and having helped me to swing for some time, he would himself get on the cot, and ask me to help him, saying. —" Brother, push me now."

On our enquiring after the *Maharshi's* age then, he said:—

" I can't exactly say how old I was then, 1 was a mere school boy—and you can guess my age. I must have been

about 8 or 9 years." Continuing to relate his recollections of the Raja, the *Maharshi* said ;—

" The Raja liked me, and I had free access to him at all hours. Sometimes I would peep in during his breakfast. It usually consisted of bread and honey, and I remember him telling me one day, as I went in during his breakfast, ' Brother, here I am eating pure bread and honey, but people say I eat beef.' "

" Sometimes I would go in as the Raja came out for his bath. He was a curious bather. Before bath he would literally get himself steeped in mustard oil, which would run dripping from all his bare limbs. He was a stout man, broad-chested, and muscular, and the sight of his bare body dipped in oil, with one small piece of cloth tied round the waist, struck awe into my boyish heart. He would, in this dress, come down with heavy steps, uttering Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic verses and jump into a huge tub of water. He would remain ,in this tub for more than an hour, all the while muttering his favourite verses, and evidently absorbed in them. I could not understand anything of what he muttered so devoutly, but it appears to me now that that was the Raja's *Upashana* or Prayers.

" Raja Ram, the Raja's adopted son, was very naughty ; and he used to play all sorts of tricks on the Raja, but all this could never disturb the equanimity of the Raja's temper. In fact, Ram Mohun Roy had the sweetest temper that I have ever seen in any man. One day I went in when the Raja was taking his midday nap. He was lying on a cot, on his back, in deep slumber. Raja Ram called me, saying, " Will you see a fun? Then come." I went to him, and he quietly walked up to the Raja's bed, and all on a sudden pounced upon him, falling flat on his breast. Nothing disturbed, the Raja awoke, saying,—'Raja Ram, Raja Ram,' and locked him in his embrace.

"One day Rama Prasad and I went up to the Raja. He

was in his sitting room. There was a cot in this room. As soon as we went near him, he asked Rama Prasad to sing one of his favourite Sanskrit Hymns :—

अजरमशोकं
जगदालोकं ।

" Ajaramas'okam
" Jagadalokam."

Rama Prasad got exceedingly nervous. He could neither sing properly nor from fear of his father refuse to obey him. So he quietly stepped underneath the cot and from there began to repeat in a most plaintive tone :—

अजरमशोकं
जगदालोकं ।

" The Raja used now and again to come to our house. My father was a great admirer of the Raja. He was in his early days a staunch believer in the popular religion of the country, but contact with the Raja gradually landed him into a general want of faith in these practices, though he never became thoroughly posted in the truths of theism as preached by Raja Ram Mohun Roy. In the early days of his friendship with the Raja, my father was in the habit of performing his *puja* or worship, with flower and other materials, every morning; and he used to do all these things with really devout feelings. But his regard for the Raja was even greater than his devotion to these pious offices ; and it oftentimes happened that while he was engaged in these devotions, the Raja would come to see him. As soon as the Raja would enter our lane, information would be sent to my father, who would immediately get up from his *puja* and come out to receive the Raja. Such was the influence that the Raja exercised over his friends.

" You see, I cannot talk of the Raja without talking of my father. So far as I was concerned, my recollections of

the Raja are intimately bound up with those of my father. I hope you don't mind it.

"Once I went to invite the Raja to the festivities of the *Durga Puja* at our place. I wen| as the representative of my grandfather, and in the usual way, I said:—' Ram Moni Thakur begs to invite you to his house, to take part in the festivities of the Puja.' 'The Raja cried out with his usual earnestness—'Ask *me* to the Puja?' That voice is still ringing in my ears. He was not offended with me—by no means. To me he was as sweet as usual, but he expressed his wonder that inspite of his crusade against idolatry, people should still ask him to the *Puja.* But he seemed at once to have felt that it was merely a social function that he was asked to perform, so he wanted me to go to Radha Prasad, his eldest son. Radha Prasad had no objection to the religious practices of our people, and he accepted the invitation, and treated me to some sweets and fruits.

"Talking of fruits, I am just reminded of the fact that the Raja had good many fruit-trees in his garden at Manicktola. These would often tempt me there. The *lickies* were a great attraction to me. I would often go to eat *lickies.* Whenever the Raja saw me roving in the fearful sun of May and June, among the *lichie* trees, he would call me to him, saying, " Brother, come here, I shall give you as many *lickies* as you want, why do you walk in the sun :" and would ask the gardener to bring the ripest fruits for me.

" Once he asked me, I remember, if I ate meat; and advised me to tell my father to have a little meat during dinner every day. " The plant," he used to say, " must be watered, or the tree will not grow to its proper stature. So it is with this body, you must feed it well, and that up from your youth." He took great care of his health himself, look* ing upon the body as a precious gift of God.

" Ram Mohun Roy had the characteristic humility of all great men in him. There was no end of visitors to his

house. Many would go to hold theological disputations with him, but few indeed of these were foemen worthy of his steel. They would mostly bore him by their irregular and irrelevant talk. But he could never ask any one to leave him. He would listen to all with due courtesy. When, however, he felt that he could not bear the foolish talk any more, he would propose a stroll in his garden, saying,—"What do you say to our taking a walk in the garden." And once upon his legs, his visitor would find it hard to keep pace with him,—he was such a wonderful walker,—and would be forced to take leave of him.

"Talking of the Raja's garden I may just tell you that it was laid out by his Mali, Ramdas. He was very much attached to the Raja and went with him to England. You may be interested to know that this Ramdas served me also for some time. On his return from England he served the Maharaja of Burdwan for many years, as the Head Gardener of the Maharaja's *Golab-Baug.* He also laid out the garden of my *Santi-Niketan* at Bolpur.

"The Raja had something in him by which he could draw all sorts of people unto him. He exercised a most mysterious influence over me. I was then a mere boy and necessarily had little opportunity of talking to him. But his very face had an attraction for me such as no other face ever had. The Raja had a carriage. It was a poor, ricketty thing. The horse had no regular trappings, and ropes would oftentimes do duty for harness. Sometimes, as the Raja drove out, the horse would get off from the carriage, and the carriage would be divorced from its compass; and occasionally the whole thing would go to such pieces that its famous owner and occupant would have to leave it in the presence of large crowds of sight-seers. On one occasion, I remember the Raja telling me, as he came by one of these misadventures, that his horse and carriage had made a clown of him.

" I used to drive with the Raja now and again in this carriage. No words passed between us generally during these drives. I would only sit in front of him, looking on his beautiful face, which had such a deep attraction for me. In fact, for the greater portion of these drives, I would be almost absolutely absorbed in the contemplation of the Raja, being insensible to all that might be going on the road side. I would sit as quiet as a doll, looking only at the Raja, and my heart would overflow with a deep but indescribable emotion. There evidently was some mystic relation between the Raja and myself. I was always so powerfully drawn by him.

" I have told you of the incident that occurred when I went one day to invite him to the Puja festivities. The way in which he cried out—"Ask me to the Pujah,"—and the words that he uttered, his countenance aglow with deep emotion. These have had a wonderful influence upon me all my life. Those words became to me even as the Mantra of a spiritual master, as my *Guru- Vakya* (गुरु वाक्य) and led me to give up idolatry. Those words aro still ringing in my ears, and they have been my guide all through this long life.

" When the Brahma Samaj was established, I used now and again to go there, but always stealthily. Bistoo used to lead the choir then as now. Bistoo had "an elder brother, Kisto by name, who also sang with Bistoo in Ram Mohun Roy's Samaj; while a Mahomedan, Golam Abbas, used to play on the *Pakhoaz.* One of the most favourite Hymns of the Raja was that commencing with the words :—

विगत विशेषं

Bigata biseshatn. Bistoo used to sing it in his sweet voice. The dear ofd tune is still ringing in my ears.

" Talking of the Brahma Samaj, in those days there were no benches and chairs in the Brahma Samaj. People going there would squat in right national fashion on carpets covered with white cotton sheets. The Raja would sit on a small bamboo-and-cane stool—a *moda.*

" On the day of the Samaj, the friends of the Raja would meet in his Garden-House at Manicktola; and then they would all walk in a procession to the place of worship in Jorasanko. The Raja had peculiar feelings on the subject. He used to say, ' When a man goes to a holy place he does not, in this country, go in a carriage, why should we then, when going to the Holiest of the Holy, go in carriages, we must walk.' But though he would walk to the Samaj, he would not use ordinary *dhoti* and *chadar*, but put on court-dress on all such occasions. The Raja had a great regard for the externals of Moslem civilisation. His idea, again, was that God being man's King and Master, in going to His Court, he must dress himself properly; must appear before Him as one fit to be present at the Court of the Prince of Princes. He had imbibed this idea also from the Mahomedans. So all his friends would go, duly dressed, like himself, to the Samaj. My father, however, formed an exception. He would always go to the Brahma Samaj in *dhoti* and *chadar*. The Raja would not quite like it; and would look askance at my father, sometimes even disparagingly pointing him out to his friend and disciple, Babu Annada Prasad Banerjee (Zamindar of Telinipara). Babu Annada Prasad was on very familiar terms with the Raja, and would oftentimes reply to his signs and gestures by telling him in plain language, that if he had not the courage to speak directly to my father on the subject, he had better not trouble him with it. Babu Annada Prasad, however, would draw my fathers attention to the subject of his dress, but my father would invariably reply—" Having to spend the whole day in my office-dress, I cannot again put me to the trouble and inconvenience of using it in the evenings, especially when I have to come and worship God, to whom we should always appear in the simplest and humblest garb."

Reverting, once more to his personal relations with the Raja, the Maharshi said :—

" There was some mystic affinity between the Raja and myself. He did not instruct me by words. I was much too young, in fact, to receive any such instructions from him, but still, as 1 have already said, he exerted a most mysterious influence upon me. I got my inspiration to work for the cause, for which he himself had lived and laboured, from him. When going ,to England, the Raja came to pay my father his farewell visit. All the members of our family and a large number of our neighbours had gathered in our spacious court-yard to bid goodbye to the Raja. I was, however, not there. And though I was then a mere strippling, the Raja wanted to see me very particularly, telling my father that he could not leave the country without shaking hands with me. So I was sent for, and the Raja shook hands with me, and then left for England. That kindly grasp had a force and meaning in it which I realised only in my later life.

" When the news of Ram Mohun Roy's death came I was by my father, and he began to weep like a boy. 1, too, was moved with a deep emotion. For though I had but little fellowship with him, and though I got no instructions from him in words, his face, and his whole personality was deeply engraved on my heart. He was my inspiration.

" He lived only for a year in Calcutta after the establishment of the Samaj. The fire that he had kindled was, however, kept up by Pundit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish. He, too, was a most extraordinary man. He had love for God, and love for Ram Mohun Roy. The two loves were closely intertwined, one with the other, in the heart and character of Ram Chandra Vidyabagish ; and this accounts for his unrivalled loyalty to the Brahma Samaj at a time its very life was despaired of. In those days the Brahma Samaj had hardly any congregation. If the weather was bad, Ram Chandra Vidyabagish would "combine Minister and Congregation both in himself. The rich people that had gathered themselves round the Raja's banner in his life-time, dispersed

directly the news of his death got to Calcutta. A few middle-class men attended the Samaj, whose Weekly Congregation would mostly be made up of straggling wayfarers, some of whom would peep in, with their bazar baskets, and others with their pet parrots. Ram Chandra Vidyabagish would sit on a broad wooden stool—a *Taktaposh,* while his little Congregation would squat on the floor, on carpets and sheets. I mean to re-establish it in the Samaj as soon as the present repairs are completed. I wish to move back to the ways of Raja Ram Mohun Roy in these matters. We have converted the Brahma Samaj into an English Church. This must be corrected. People must leave their shoes off during Prayers. It is not proper to convert our Samaj into an English Church."

Gradually the conversation began to approach more recent times; the Maharshi's relations with Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, his conflicts with Keshub Chandra Sen, and so on. Just at this point his break-fast, containing a cup of pomegranate juice and some fruits, was announced, and finding that we had all that we could possibly have from him concerning Ram Mohun Roy, we rise to make our obeisance to him arid bid him goodbye.

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

AS

A JURIST AND A POLITICIAN.

BY

N. N. GHOSH, ESQ.,

Barrister-at-Law.

CALCUTTA:

1896.

RAM MOHUN ROY—AS A JURIST AND A POLITICIAN.

IT is a remarkable proof of the Raja's versatility that such of his writings, as it has been possible to trace, on subjects connected with law and politics, exhibit deep research, accurate knowledge, clearness of conception, and a firm grasp of principles. His paper entitled *Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindoo Law of Inheritance,* may be cited as an illustration. Here the writer comes to the conclusion, as the result of his researches, that under the old Hindoo Law women enjoyed rights which have been presented in a very much narrower form by moden Commentators. " These restraints on female inheritance," the writer is shrewd enough to observe, " encourage, in a great degree, polygamy, a frequent source of the greatest misery in native families; a grand object of Hindoos being to secure a provision for their male offspring, the Law which relieves them from the necessity of giving an equal portion to their wives, removes a principal restraint on the indulgence of their inclinations in respect to the number they marry." Within the present limits it is not possible to refer in detail to the evidence cited by the writer or to dwell on the keenness of the insight he exhibits into the causes of a social evil. His *Essay on the Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property according to the Law of Bengal* would do credit to any trained and professional lawyer deeply versed in the history of the Hindoo Law. One of his conclusions in this paper is that in following those expositions which best reconcile law with reason, the author of the Bengal system is warranted by the highest sacred

authority as well as by the example of the most revered of his predecessors, the author of the *Mitakshara.*

The Rule and Ordinance that was passed on the 14th March,! 1823, by Mr. Adam, Officiating Governor-General, curtailing the freedom of the Press, elicited a Memorial to the Supreme Court which had to register the Regulation. The Memorial, which was signed by several leading gentlemen of the town, was presumably drawn up by the Raja, who was one of its signatories. This proved unsuccessful, and a Petition of Appeal was addressed to His Majesty the King (George IV) in Council. This Petition also appears to have been the Raja's handiwork. The two documents are remarkable productions. For cogency of argument, accuracy of fact, and appreciation of principle, they could not be surpassed. No writer at the present day could put the case for liberty more effectively than the Raja has done. Space will not permit the making of any extracts, specially where a selection is difficult from among paragraphs almost every one of which is a gem rich and rare. The writings on Suttee, which one might *a priori* imagine to be so warm and vehement as to be devoid of balance, are themselves an illustration of the Raja's unfailing sobriety and clearness of vision. Nowhere does he plead that every practice which is morally wrong has to be repressed by penal legislation. The issue he sets forth is clear and definite. He abstains, as far as possible, from the enunciation of abstract doctrines of sweeping generality, confines himself to the consideration of practical evils, material wrongs, and argues in effect that a practice which is not merely immoral, but criminal, must be treated as a crime. Whatever is productive of injury to the individual, and, through the individual, to the Society, is criminal and should be dealt with as such, all usage to the contrary notwithstanding. That appears to be the substance of the Raja's contention, and it will hardly be resisted by the most fastidious philosopher of the *laisser faire* type. The breadth of

the Raja's knowledge of the administration of the country, the accuracy of his insight, and the soundness of his opinions on many questions of Government, are well illustrated by his answers to the numerous questions put to him by the Select Committee of the House of Commons. It was certainly no ordinary person that could show as complete and masterly a knowledge of the practical operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India, and of the general character and condition of its native inhabitants, as he undoubtedly possessed of the *Upanishads* and of the Precepts of Jesus,

ItAJA RAM MOHUN ROY;

AS

A MAN OF LETTERS.

BY

BABU MOHINI MOHUN CHATTERJEE, M.A., B.L.

CALCUTTA:

1896.

RAM MOHUN ROY-AS A MAN OF LETTERS.

FORMS of expression, though important, do not afford, by themselves, an adequate criterion for judging a literary or generally as artistic character. *Techniqu* is great, but the idea underlying the subject is greater. Ram Mohun Roy's culture was so many-sided, his scholarship so wide and profound, his natural gifts so rare, that anxious thought and close study are needed for a proper appreciation of his position as a man of letters.

Considering the varied character of his writings, one is struck by his sturdy faith in his art as an engine of human progress. Primers of Grammar and Geography, and abstruse Treatise on Law, Politics and Theology are alike members of his literary family. From popular songs to unpopular science, his literary hospitality is extended. His love of knowledge,* in its multiform aspects, beams out of his writings with equal radiance. As witness, his letter on English Education addressed to Lord Amherst. His motto may well have been the words of Goethe " Licht meir Licht"—Light, more Light.

His controversial writings are instinct with a singular love of truth and a reverence for freedom of thought. In form they are the productions of a scholar and a gentleman. Not a word, not a syllable has he written for mere effect or to hurt an antagonist's feelings. His method was justified by the result—conversion by controversy. Ram Chandra Vidyavagish and Dr. Adam were the fruits of his labours in this field. Read his *Appeals to the Christian Public* and judge. The filial piety of Mr. Marshman finds an apology for his father; but Ram Mohun Roy has never needed one. " With the exception of this deviation from liberality, (on the part of Dr. Marshman), remarks Dr. Rees in his Preface to the American Edition of the *Precepts ef*

Jesus, "the controversy on both sides has been throughout conducted with a spirit of Christian candour and fairness." The following words of Ram Mohun himself indicate the spirit of his controversial writings better than any thing one might say:—"I hope it will not be presumed that I intend to establish the preference of my faith over that of other men. The result of controversy on such a subject, however multiplied, must be ever unsatisfactory, for the reasoning faculty, which leads men to certainty in things within its reach, produces no effect on questions beyond its comprehension."

Sincerity, according to Carlyle, is the test of heroism. A prominent quality of Ram Mohun Roy's writings is his transparent sincerity, which indeed is but the outward manifestation of his love of truth. He has not said a word that he did not feel to be true. In religion he discarded esotericism in every form and did not believe in deceiving the multitude for their own good. " By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct," he says, " I, born a Brahmun, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong and whose temporal advantage depends on the present system. But these, however, accumulated, I can tranquilly bear, trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice, perhaps acknowledged with gratitude." However severe may be the tests applied, his literary honesty will come out the purer and brighter from the fire. He never misrepresents or misunderstands his antagonists. The whole of his writings will be scanned in vain for a single instance of imputing to his adversary an opinion for the sole glory of demolishing it. He takes his opponents at their best. Scriptural texts, cited or relied on by him, are never mutilated, wrenched from context or divorced from their authorized meaning. Who will say, With the experience of our own days, that such **honesty**

which Ought to be ordinary, is not deserving of extraordinary praise? Ram Mohun Roy has never allowed rhetoric to master logic or passion sobriety. The *Tuhfatul Muwakhiddin,* in so far as one can judge to whom the original is inaccessible, is a model of close logical reasoning. His highest praise is this, that there is not a line of fine writing in all his works.

In the political writings of Ram Mohun Roy, one is impressed by the dutiful care with which he avoids making a statement not resting on his own experience or legitimate inferences arising from it. In concluding his answers to questions on *The Judicial System of India,* he says :—" In preparing my replies to these queries, I have not been biassed by the opinions of any individual, nor have I consulted with any person or men, or referred to any work on the subject of India. I have, for the facts, consulted only my own recollections ; and in regard to the opinions expressed, I have been guided only by my conscience."

An attentive student of the writings of Ram Mohun Roy finds on every page the stamp of thoroughness, sobriety, straightforwardness and modesty. His conscientiousness and sympathy cannot fail to impress the open mind.

The conditions under which this imperfect sketch has been prepared prevents any attempt at adequate treatment of Ram Mohun Roy's form and expression. But the form is worthy of the substance. The stately and dignified prose of his English works calls to mind the masters who adorned English literature in the latter period of the last century and the early years of the present. Since his time many of his countrymen have achieved eminence as writers of English prose, but few have attained such a style of classical purity as Ram Mohun. His expressions may at times offend against the rules of Grammar, but never against the rules of style or taste. Bentham's appreciation of Ram Mohun Roy's English ptyle is too well-known to need reproduction.

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

AS

A THEOLOGIAN.

BY

PANDIT SITANATH TATWABHUSHAN.

CALCUTTA;

1896.

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

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PANDIT SITANATH TATWABHUSHAN.

CALCUTTA:

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RAM MOHUN ROY,—AS A THEOLOGIAN.

RAM MOHUN ROY was, as every one knows, a Theist, a firm believer in, and a devoted worshipper of, the One True God. But his Theism was not an abstract and colourless creed like that of many who profess to be his followers. The universality of religion as a fact having its root deep laid in the nature of man, was an idea which had a strong hold on his mind, and it man even be said that his whole life was devoted to the practical realization of this idea,—to the establishment of a Universal Church of Theism, a Church which should include all worshippers of God irrespective of national and denominational peculiarities. But it cannot escape even the most superficial reader of the Raja's works, that, notwithstanding his admiration for ,what ever was good and noble in Christianity and Muhamudanism, the type of Theism which he cherished with the deepest love and respect was unmistakably the Hindu type. It was Hindu Theism, as expounded in the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta* Philosophy, and in later works based on these, which gave Ram Mohun Roy the deepest solace in his spiritual struggles, and inspired in him the warmest enthusiasm. It was of the Rishis who laid the foundations of India's National Theism, and the great Sankaracharya, who helped in the revival, development and propagation of this religion after its partial and temporary collapse under the Buddhist ascendancy,—it was of these apostles of the deeper religion of India that the Raja was most fond of speaking, and whose writings and utterances he laboured most strenuously, by various means, to make better known to his countrymen as Well as to foreigners. It was not a mere instinctive fondness for what is nearest to one in time and place, it was not a mere feeling

of nationality, neither was it merely the apostolic policy of being all things to all men that led him to bring these repositories of sacred learning to prominence, and appeal to his countrymen in their name. It was evidently a hearty acceptance of their substantial truth, of their value as helps to the attainment of the higher life, that fed him to devote the best days of his life to their propagation[1], and to the vindication of their fundamental teachings against the attacks of a corrupt and degenerate priesthood, and' of foreigners who did not appreciate or would *not* admit their merits. But nevertheless, the great reviver of Hindu Theism in recent times was far from that blind adherence to the letter of scripture which forms, in popular estimation, a part of orthodoxy, both here and elsewhere. He exhorts us now and again to use our reason *freely* as well as revere the scriptures, in our search after religious truth.

Ram Mohun Roy's freedom front bigotry, from blind "adherence to external authority, may be best seen in his method of interpreting the S'astras. By the S'agtras, it must be noted, Ram Mohun Roy meant, almtost invariably, the Vedas, and especially those parts of the *Vedas* which treat of the Supreme Being,, namely the *Upanishads,* Unlike the more recent teachers of the Hindu Religion, and following, all ancient leaders of Hindu thought, he held these writings as the highest authority in matters pertaining to the National Religion, and considered the Law-Books, Puranas, Itihasas and Tantras as of minor importance, and their teachings as acceptable only when they agreed with those of the Védds. He held that the worship of the various Puranic gods and goddesses by means of images and material offerings was intended only for those pitiable beings whose intellects were utterly incapable of conceiving the formless, infinite One, and rendering him a worship in spirit and in truth. Such people, he says, require something to keep themselves from becoming utterly irreligious and and im-

moral, and idolatry is such an expedient devised by the wise teachers of the National Religion. He did not seem to have any belief in the existence of gods and goddesses either Vedic or Puranic, for he speaks, ever and anon, of these deities being so many powers of the Supreme Being—*allegorically* spoken of by the S'astras as so many personalities. He would not object to the worshipper concentrating his mind on particular objects of nature considered as so many manifestations of the Divine Power, but the worship of distinct gods and goddesses he considered to be unworthy of intelligent and thoughtful men, and as expressly opposed to the teachings of the Vedas. The Raja was of course far from thinking that the later writers on the Hindu Religion were all aware of the allegorical character of the gods and goddesses of the National Pantheon. In fact, he does not conceal his contempt for these writers and their superstitions. But as regards the higher Puranas and Tantras, he seems to have penetrated the gorgeous imagery that clothes their thoughts and reached the fundamental principles underlying their teachings. These teachings he found to be identical with those of the Upanishads, and, as such, he recognized their value. But on the whole he seems to have had scanty sympathy with the attempts of these writers to popularize the teachings of the S'astras—attempts which had led them to be utterly misunderstood, and to a wholesale degradation of the national religion.

Ram Mohun Roy's religion was, therefore, what may be called, and what he himself called, Hindu Theism the Theism inculcated in works, chiefly Vedic, which have been held in the highest estimation by the nation from time immemorial. To bring this religion out of the rubbish of superstition and priestcraft that had accumulated upon it during centuries of ignorance, to propagate its noble and profound literature throughout the country, to let its blessings be enjoyed, not merely by the learned, but even by those ignorant of the

saered language of the country, to free it from the peculiarities of the times and conditions of life in the midst of which it had originated and been developed, and to present it in a form that should suit the changed conditions of individual and national life—this was the object of Ram Mohun Roy's life-long labours as a Theologian. It is not perhaps generally thought, by those who are trying to revive the National Religion, that Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the first Hindu Revivalist, in the truest sense of the term. He it was who, in recent times, first drew the attention of his countrymen to the hidden truth and life-giving power of the religion of India's noblest sons, after their successors had been fed with husks for centuries by its selfish leaders, and at a time when those who had imbibed the influences of English educatiqn were looking for life and light to the religion of their teachers and rulers. Ram Mohun Roy sought to revive just what could and can be revived—what can bear the light and heat of the day, and not what could not, by any means, be made to live. If the present generation of Revivalists could be made to understand this and to recognise him as their natural leader, instead of ignoring him and arraying themselves against him, their well-meant efforts might meet with a surer success than they have hitherto done.

The Raja saw that the Theism of the Vedas wus not merely a religion to be believed in and practised like Christianity and Islam, but that it was also closely allied to a profound and elaborate system, of philosophy, namely the VeManta. He knew that for the masses, a religion that touched the heart and inspired a zeal for practical righteousness was enough. Vedic Theism is, indeed, such a religion. But its peculiarity is that it is not merely a system of faith and practical duties. It is, even in its main source, the *Upanishads,* a philosophy. Its fundamental principles, as set forth in those writings, give unmistakable tokens of their being conclusions arrived at—insights into truth gained by—

a long course of intellectual searching. The *Upanishads* themselves scarcely give us any clue to the reasonings by which the conclusions embodied in them were arrived at. But when it is considered that these conclusions are very much unlike the ordinary deliverances of common sense, and are, in fact, beyond the comprehension of superficial thinkers, and when, moreover, it is seen that the same truths are obtained by independent seekers after truth in ancient and modern times by long courses of thinking, it becomes evident that Vedic Theism has a philosophy at its back. Such a philosophy is the Vécjánta, which is erroneously identified with the *S'ariraka Sutras* and Sankaracharya's Commentary on the same,—the most revered treatises on the system,—but which is in fact a living and growing system of philosophical thought, putting itself forth in innumerable treatises from the *Upanishads* upwards down to the latest work devoted to the same grand themes that they treated of, and inspired with the same keen search after the one urrtiivid£d Thought underlying all reality that inspired the Vedic seers. Our Raja saw all this very clearly, and, as a worthy son of the Rishis, contributed his part to this grand system of national Thought. He followed the method that so many eminent Hindus had done before. He took up the *Sutras*, the aphorisms that had guided Vedintic speculation, in fact all orthodox Hindu thought, from time immemorial; he studied Sankara's Commentary, itself a profound system of original thought on the same lines as the *Upanishads* and the *Sutras*, and gave the result of his studies in the form of a Bengali Commentary on the *Sutras*. Those who are competent to pronounce judgment on the subject have been heard to say that it is not, as its author modestly declares it to be, an abridgment of Sankara's great Commentary, but an original treatise fit to be mentioned with the great Commentaries that were, and are still, extant,—Commentaries that have formed the basis of whole systems of religious and

philosophical thought, namely those of Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha and others. The originality of the Raja's way of thinking may be best seen by the general reader in the records that have come down to us of his controversies with his Christian opponents. In these the Raja stands out prominently as a defender of philosophical thought on Vedantic lines against dogmatic thought of the ordinary Christian stamp, He defends ably the fundamental unity of thought—the sole reality of God—which the Vedanta insists upon, against the cavils of ordinary dualistic thinking. Christian, missionaries then, as now, had their stock arguments against the Vedanta, its supposed tendency to immorality and impiety, since it unified, and thus equalised, all things; its practical denial of creation, since it made the Creator and the created fundamentally one; and so on. Ram Mohun Roy met these objections in a way which showed how deeply he shared the insight of the Hindu sages of old, and how, amidst the dust and smoke of controversy in which he had to pass his days, the social reformer and politician had his feet firm upon the solid rock of fundamental truth—upon the eternal verities of which all that meet the eye are only passing appearances, We have space to make only one extract from the *Brahmanical Magazine* on Maya, which a Christian opponent of the Vedanta had set up as superior to God according to that philosophy :—

" Maya is the power of God, through which the world receives its birth, existence and changes; but no men of learning who are not biassed by partiality would infer from these opinions an idea of the inferiority of God to Maya, his attribute. For, as men of every tribe and of every country whatsoever acknowledge God to be the cause of the world, they necessarily consider him possessed of the power through which he creates the world. But no one is from this concluded to believe that God is subordinate to that power. God pardons the sins of those that sincerely repent, through his afetri

bute of mercy : this cannot be taken as an admission of the Deity's subjection to his own mercy. The followers of the Vedanta say *that* Maya is opposed to knowledge, for when a true knowledge of God is obtained, the effect of Maya, which makes the soul appear distinct from God, does immediately cease. The term Maya implies, primarily, the power of creation, arid secondarily, its effect, which is the Universe. The Vedanta, by comparing the world with the misconceived notion of a snake when a rope really exists, means that the world, like the supposed snake, has no independent existence that *it* receives its existence from the Supreme Being. lit like manner, trie Vedánta compares the world with a dream : as all objects seen in a dream depend upon the motion of the mind, so the existence of the world is dependent upon the being of God, who is the only object of supreme love *i* and in declaring that God is all in all, and that there is no other substance except God, the Vedanta means that existence in reality belongs to God alone. He is consequently true and omnipresent; nothing else can bear the name of true existence. We find the phrases, God is all and in all, in the Christian books ; and I suppose they do not mean by such words that pots, mats, etc., are gods. I am inclined to believe that by these terms they mean the omnipresence of God, Why do you attempt, by cavils, to find fault with the Vedánta ?"

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

AS

AN EDUCATIONIST.

BY

BABU MANMATHA NATH DUTT, M.A., M.R.A.S.

CALCUTTA ;
1896.

RAM MOHUN ROY—AS AN EDUCATIONIST.

ALL right-thinking men in the country are at the present day sufficiently alive to the good that has been done to India by the introduction and spread of English education. India has glorious traditions—India has a splendid literature of her own. In India civilization dawned before other nations of the world came into being. All this is true no doubt; but England will always have the credit of rescuing her from a dreadful oblivion into which she fell before the advent of the English by the positive apathy and antipathies of the preceding eras. Whatever might have been the views of foreign nations regarding India in the earlier years of the British rule, it is an established fact now that she has made an impression—a golden impression never to be effaced—on the western mind, and that her philosophical and religious thought still holds a unique place in the world of thought. A keen interest in her literature, philosophy and ancient civilization is being gradually evinced by the leaders of thought in the West. This has been mainly brought about by the spread of English education in India, which has opened a means of communication between the natives of the soil and its foreign rulers and has become the key to unlock the portals of the grand intellectual treasures imbedded in the literature of Ancient India.

For the early introduction of English education in India, which has been fraught with so many momentous consequences, we are indebted to that great Reformer, Raja Ram Mohun Roy. As, for religious and social reforms, the name of this great son of India has been emblazoned in letters of gold in her history, so also his position as the pioneer of the educational reform in this land will never be forgotten by

posterity. From his fertile brain emanated first the idea that education in India should be imparted through the medium of English, when during the administration of Lord Amherst, the question was being discussed whether Sanskrit, Persian or English should constitute the means of instruction in Indian Schools. Some of the officials were for introducing Persian and Sanskrit as the medium of instruction and others were for English. Raja Ram Mohun's far-sighted and capacious intellect did not fail to perceive at this critical juncture that English should form the means of imparting instruction. He could quite clearly see that without the mastery of a living language the study of the classics would be of no practical value. In his letter addressed to Lord Amherst in 1823, he pointed out clearly the mistake of the introduction of Sanskrit as the medium of instruction and the utility of the study of English. He fully realized the good will of the Government in establishing a new Sanskrit School in Calcutta " a bJessirg for which they must ever be grateful," but he was. equally anxious that " the efforts to promote it should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow in the most useful channels.

He understood full well the value of the study of physical science in the advancement of the civilization of a country, The knowledge of science both practical and theoretical is, highly important for the material and intellectual prosperity of a nation. The great seer had before him this view and he wrote :—

" We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the Natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful Sciences which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of the other parts of the world."

Though himself a great Sanskrit and Arabic Scholar,

having always the highest reverence for the excellences of Sanskrit literature, he justly and very correctly understood that mere Sanskrit learning was of no value towards the improvement of the nation. With the advance of civilization all the countries of the world are approaching one another. We have now improved facilities of communication. Netr works of railways, fast running steamers and diverse other means have been opened up all over the world. Besides, free-trade is every day bringing into closer relation the various nations of the world. The tendency of modern civilization is to find out a common medium of intercourse between all countries. And it has not been unwisely suggested that "pigeon English " is likely to serve the purpose, as English is now spoken over the greater part of the world.

The great Hindu Reformer understood the fully and advocated very strongly the introduction of English. He very wisely wrote that by learning Sanskrit only "the pupils would acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the adoption of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men, such as are already commonly taught in all parts of India. Besides, Sanskrit learning is so difficult that almost a life-time is necessary for its acquisition."

But while speaking in favour of the introduction of English he did not deprecate Sanskrit learning. He wrote, " If it were thought necessary to perpetuate this language for the sake of the valuable information it contains, this should be accomplished by other means—namely by holding out premiums and granting certain allowances to eminent Pandits who have already undertaken to teach on their account." This wise suggestion of the Raja has, after such a long time, arrested the attention of the Government and it is on this line that the Government has sanctioned some money **for** the maintenance of Sanskrit toles.

The political value of English education, which the leaders

of thought in our country have so greatly appreciated, was not lost sight of by this great thinker, and he wrote :—

" In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if such had been the policy of the British Legislature.

It is not by merely placing, a fruitful education scheme before the country that he advanced the educational cause of India, but he gave a practical proof of his views by taking a prominent part along with Sir Edward Hyde East and David Hare in the establishment of the Hindu College. After a fight and discussion extending over a number of years, Raja Ram Mohun succeeded in introducing English as the medium *pi* imparting instruction in Indian schools. By his great talent and energy, far-sightedness and intelligence, the great Ram Mohun laid the foundation of the future well-being of India. What the country has achieved now through the spread of English education and what it has been achieving gradually, politically, socially and intellectually, is all owing to the talent and exertions of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE NATIONAL

IN

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

BY

BABU BEPIN CHANDRA PAL.

CALCUTTA:

1896.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE NATIONAL
IN
RAM MOHUN ROY.

ONCE hears a good deal now about universalism. But unless we identify the catholicity of the great Akbar with the modern ideal represented by the term universalism, the earliest apostle of it, at any rate, in modern times, was undoubtedly Raja Ram Mohun Roy ; and as yet, I believe, be stands as one of its greatest apostles. It is this transcendental universalism of the Raja that .gained for him the admiration of some of the brightest intellects of his time, in England, as it draws all sects and denominations of his own countrymen today.

The universalism of the Raja found the most prominent expression in his treatise on Universal Religion, which is reproduced elsewhere, and in the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj. In fact, to understand the real meaning of the Trust Deed, one should read it by the light of his tract on Universal Religion. In the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj, the Raja says that persons of all sects and denominations shall be allowed to meet together to worship God, the common Father of all; and in his tract on Universal Religion, he explains who this God is and how he is to be worshipped. In his universalism, the Raja took his stand upon the definition of God or Brahman as given in the *Brahma Sutras, viz.,*—from whom are the birth, etc., of this world, he is Brahman, and the *Taittiriya Sruti.* which says—He, from whom all these objects proceed, having proceeded in whom they live, and towards whom, at the time of final dissolution, they go and into whom they enter, is Brahman, know him particularly. This is what Sanskrit Philosophy calls *Tatasthalakskanarri,* or defmition through inference. This inferential definition of God

is the most broad, and admits, therefore, of being applied *to* almost all objects of human worship. In fact, the Raja clearly makes the widest application of it in his treatise on *Universal Religion.* And it was on this inferential definition of God, that the universalism of Raja Ram Mohun Roy was based, and it was on this broad and catholic platform, which he called the Brahma Samaj, that he wanted to bring together for purposes of divine worship and human fellowship, men of all creeds and sects. And none may deny that a universal church—a common place of worship for all men, to whatever sect or denomination they may belong, can only be established by defining God as simply the Author and Governor of the universe; and by worshipping him only as such and in no other relation.

To bring together all creeds, one must himself rise above creed. The Brahma Samaj, as founded by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, therefore, laid down no creed, imposed no declaration of faith on its adherents, but simply called upon them to leave aside, for the moment, their personal peculiarities or denominational notions and to be joined with one another in the contemplation of the Author and Governor of the universe, as their common Father and Master.

But while it is possible to found a House of Prayer such as the Brahma Samaj was in the days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, on this colourless universalism, it is not possible to build any sect or organise a community upon such a foundation. And it must be said to the credit of Raja Ram Mohun Roy that he went in for neither. His Brahma Samaj was not a sect, was not a community, but a simple Meeting House for the worship of God in an absolutely non-denominational form. And this very act shows the greatness of the Raja's genius.

He was born at a period off the world's history when an irrational kind of universalism rode triumphant all over the civilized countries. The French Illumination was then in the very zenith of its glory. And one of the foremost

ideals of the French Illumination was to establish a sort of universalism that should destroy all the ancient and time-honoured landmarks of tradition and custom,—distinctions of name and peculiarities of expression that differentiate both individuals from individuals and nations from nations. The dream of the latter end of the eighteenth century was the building up of a cosmopolitan society and a universal state where all were to be equal, and which should leave no room for any distinction or differentiation. It was the natural offspring of the ideal of an insane individualistic philosophy that dominated very largely the thought of the last century. Ram Mohun Roy, though a most ardent advocate of equality—we know how, when on his way to England, he came by a mishap that inflicted a permanent injury on him by making him lame for the rest of his days, in going to pay his respects to the banner of the French Republic, on board a French vessel,—though his love for the cause of freedom was so deep and real that he gave a public dinner in Calcutta in commemoration of the emancipation of the principality of Naples from the yoke of foreign dominion,—he never was an advocate of this sort of insane individualism. In this very treatise on *Universal Religion*, to which we have already referred, he distinctly says that this kind of "selfwilled individualism is opposed both by Scriptures and by reason." In fact, all his methods of reform, whether social, political, or religious, prove that his was a most rational and proper kind of universalism. It was not a mere abstraction, but an ideal that necessarily had to formulate itself through a variety of local and national limitations.

Indeed one cannot form a correct estimate of the genius of the Raja, or get an accurate view of his ideals, unless one reads his universalism by the light of his nationalism, and his nationalism by the light of his universalism. The universalism that violently tears itself away from national institutions and vehicles, and seeks thus to set up a natural

antagonism with nationalism, is a pure myth: and when it sets to itself the task of the reformer, it becomes worse—a dangerous delusion, The universal and he particular are, in all rational systems of thought, regarded only as two moments of one complete whole, The universal is nothing unless it articulates itself through some particular; on the other hand, the particular loses all movement, that is all life, when it divorces the universal. The universal can only take legitimate shape among a people through the national and traditional institutions of that people; that is the one only method of the realisation of universal ideals by a people. National institutions also can grow and escape stagnation, decay and death only by an unceasing expansiveness and adaptability born of an equally unceasing apprehension of the universal This essential unity between the universal and the particular, between God and man, between humanity and nationality, between socialism and individualism, was the central truth of the system of Raja Ram Mohun *Roy.* *H*is work, whether in Theology or Religion, Ethics or Politics, was, therefore, always constructive and not destructive, His appeals were, therefore, always to the voice of reason within, which, when purified by proper processes, transmits really the voice of God,—and to the scriptures without, which, ins* pite of differences and discrepancies, are yet the repositories of the highest spiritual experiences of the race. His appreciation of the past, as I said elsewhere, on another occasion, was of the highest, his apprehension of the needs of the present was also of the keenest, He neither ignored the past nor mistrusted the present, but seeing the develop., ment of a divine purpose in the past as well as in the present, he estimated both at their right value and sought to engraft; the present reforms on past traditions and realise the spirit that was in those past traditions more fully and completely than ever, through the changed forms of the present

HINTS ON THE STUDY

OF

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

BY

BABU BRAJENDRA NATH SIL, M.A.,

CALCUTTA;

1896.

HINTS ON THE STUDY

OF

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.

a,—Formative Influences—Sources and Origin.

As a general introduction to a critical study and estimate of the Raja's works, I may note that his intellectual ancestry must be sought in four different representative cultures of the world's history.

(1) The whole body of Hindu culture and civilisation with the pre-eminent exception of the primitive stage of Nature worship as represented in the Samhita portions of the Vedas.

***(2)* The various schools and sects of Arabic Philosophy and Theology,—Aristotle's logical moulds and forms of thought in which were cast the material of the Koran and Shariyat-especially the heterodox sects among whom may be mentioned the Mutazalas, the Sufis, the Muwahidis, and, perhaps, also the masonic body of the sincere Brethren, the ' Encyclopaedists ' of the 10th century.**

(3) The eighteenth century movement of Rationalism represented by the English Deists and Free-Thinkers, the sceptics Hume and Gibbon, the French Encyclopaedists, and especially the religious sect of the French Theo-Philanthropists associated with the names of Voltaire and Volney—movements ultimately traceable through Locke's Philosophy to Bacon's Protest against Authority and the Baconian Method of Induction.

(4) Lastly, Christian Theology and Philosophy, Old as well as New Testament culture—in the entire range of its historic origin and development.

b.—The Two Rant Mo hun Roys,

AT the outset, I would sound a note of warning against the indiscriminate use of the rich but heterogenous materials presented in the Raja's works. For a right understanding and estimate of the Raja's thought and utterance, it is necessary to bear in mind the two essentially distinct but equally indispensable parts which the Raja played on the historic stage. There was Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the Cosmopolite, the Rationalist Thinker, the Representative Man with a universal outlook on human civilization and its historic march;

a Brahmin of the Brahmins, and Cheirophan moralising from the commanding height of some Eiffel Tower on the far-seen vistas and outstretched prospects of the, world's civilization, Jeremy Bentham's admired and dearly loved collaborator in the service of mankind ; the peer of the Humes, the Gibbons, the Voltalres, the Volneys, the Diderots or any Free-Thinker or Rationalist of them all. For him, all idols were broken and the parent of illusions. Authority, had been hacked to pieces. He, the Cosmopolite, was daunted by no speculative doubts, discouraged by no craven fears. For him, the Veil of Isis was torn ; the Temple had been rent in twain and the Holy of Holies lay bear to his gaze ! For he had had his disillusionment, was indeed a thorough *roue* of the *monde* (or *demitmonde)* intellectual. Calmly, fearlessly, truthfully, he probed, fathomed, dissected. And by deep meditation and brooding he had won a glimpse of the Truth.

But there was another and equally characteristic part played by the Raja—the part of the Nationalist Reformer, the constructive practical social legislator,—the Renovator of National Scriptures and Revelations. For the Raja was cast in Nature's regal mould. His was the work of half a dozen, giants. His name was Legion. Hindoo Pandit, Zaburdasht Moulavie, Christian Padree, the Rishi of a new Manwantara or Yuga, the Imam or Mahdi of a new Tradition, the Prophet or Nabi of a Newer Dispensation—by what name shall I call this man ?

c.—Various Aspects of the Raja's work,

YES, the Raja carried on single-handed the work of Nationalist Reform and Scripture Renovation and Interpretation for three such different cultures and civilisations as the Hindu, the Christian and the Mahomedan. Unfortunately the Manezaratul Adiyan and other Arabic and Persian works in which the Raja developed his scheme of Moslem religious or socio-religious restoration are lost. But his later writings dealing with the Hindu and Christian Scriptures remain, and are an endless mine of the most precious material to the student of Comparative Religion, Sociology and Ethnology.

The Raja's work falls under the following heads—

I. Raja Ram Mohun Roy—the Cosmopolite, Rationalist, Universalist, standing aloof from ethnic, national, historic limitations and embodiments.

Under this head I note the following divisions :—

(I). As a Rationalist, Deist, Theo-Philanthropist, Universalist.

This is the predominant element of the *Tuhfatool Muwahhiddin* stage of the Raja's mental history, and an element which, however, subsequently enriched, embodied, and clothed in particularities, throughout remained at the bottom of all the Raja's deepest and most characteristic thought.

(2). As a Sociologist—with special reference to Politics, Jurisprudence, Ethics, Economics, and Education, (both pure and applied, theoretical and practical).

(3) As the founder, in a very real sense of the term, of the Science of Comparative Religion, and the classification and development of Religion.

To this Cosmopolitan or Universalistic department of the Raja's work belongs the founding of the Brahmo Somaj which by its Trust-Deed was to be a Meeting-House of the Worshippers of the One God, whether members of Hindu, Mahomedan, Christian or other communities. The Raja's Somaj was a Meeting-House, a Congregation of Worshippers, but had no direct social significance whatever.

II. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the Practician, the Religious and Social Reformer—the Nationalist reforming national scriptures and national customs on national lines, *by the* methods of liberal interpretation, historic restoration and renovation, and the reconcilement of Authority with Reason and social well-being.

Under this head will come :—

(I). The Raja as a Hindu Reformer, Religious as well as Social; a Restorer of Hindu Scriptural Truth and Revelation.

(2). The Raja as a Christian Reformer, the Interpreter and Reformer of Christian Scriptural Truth and Revelation.

d.—Classification of the Raja's Works.

THE Raja's works written from the Cosmopolitan or Universalist or Rational point of view.

Prarthana Patra, Brahmopasana Trust-Deed, *Brahma Sangit*, English Prefaces to the English Translations of the *Upanishads*, Preface to the *Precepts of Jesus.*

" Reasons of a Hindu for frequenting Unitarian Places of Worship." " Letter on the Prospects of a Unitarian Christian Mission." " Tuhfatool Muwahhddin " (early stage).

" Letter on Education," " Petitions in connection with the Liberty of the Press."

The Raja's " Evidence before the Select Committee of the Parliament," " The Essay on Stridhan," " The Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property," etc.

II. The Raja's works as a Religious Reformer and Scripture-Restorer.

(I). The Raja's works touching Hindu Religious or Socio-Religious matters.

These may be brought under the following heads :—

(a) The Raja's real and rational views put in a Hindu garb (*e.g.*, Shastric authorities alluded to in *Brahmopasana*, Prefaces to the Bengali Translations of the Upanishads, etc.)

(b) What the Raja really thought was the meaning of pure and original Hindu Scriptures (the work of restoration and renovation). Here the Raja took his stand on the Upanishads (Vedas) and the Vedanta Sutras (authoritative redaction of the Vedas.) as Hindu Scripture or Revelation, *e.g., Vedanta-sara, Vedanta-Bhashya, Upanishadadi, Vajra-skchi, etc.*

N. B.—Here the Raja, taking his stand on the Hindu Scriptures, accepts the infallibility of the Vedas the doctrine of Absolute Monism *(Advaitavad), of Maya, of Metampsychosis, of karma, and also, for* purposes of reconstruction, the outward myths and paraphernalia of Vedantism. He, however, interprets those doctrines in a fruitful and suggestive way, or makes them non-essential matters. It must be remembered that the Raja philosophically accepted the doctrines of *Advaitavad, Mayavad,* and possibly also of Re-incarnation, (though this is made non-essential). These doctrines were so Interpreted as to make them consistent with the rational and ethical basis of Religion and Society.

(c) Controversies and discussions with Hindu sectarians, such as Vaishnavas, Saktas, etc.

Also the Raja's propaganda of Hindu Socio-Religious Reform, *e.g., Chari-Prasner Uttar, Pathya Pradan, Goswamir sahit Vichar, Kavitakarer sahit Vichar, etc.,* (conducted in Bengali) ; also *Sati-Daha vishayak Pravandha* (English as well as Bengali).

Here the Raja's rationalism is apparently at its weakest. For, not only the Védás, but also the Smritis, Puranas and Tantras are employed as sacred authorities by the Raja quite in accordance with the Hindu canons of scriptural interpretation. While express Hindu doctrines such as Avatar (Incarnation and Partial Incarnation) are recognised and sacred authors admitted for the well-known Puranas, etc.." the Raja interprets them all so as to make them compatible with the purest rationalism. For example, Incarnation is shown by Shastric authorities to be inapplicable to God, but only to the created and perishable gods and goddesses ; and belief in the existence of the latter as higher degrees of finite beings is deprived of all religious or spiritual significance, and

thus reduced to harmlessness. A Hand-Book of Hinduism according to the Raja, giving the substance of his redactions of all Hindu scriptures (including Puranas and Tantras), his proofs and authorities, and his interpretations, would prove extremely useful in the present age, and may be prepared on the basis of works of this and the preceding-class (*b* and *c).*

(d) Works defending Hindu Scriptures and their teachings from Christian (Missionary) attack, *e.g., Brahmanical Magazine, Letters of Ram Dass.*

Here the Raja attempts a rational exposition and harmony *(Samanvay)* of the Hindu Philosophical Systems, and turns the table skilfully against-orthodox (Missionary) Christianity. These works stand next to *(a)* in point rationalism and freedom of judgment.

(2). The Raja's works touching the Christian Religion.

(a) The Raja's views in a Christian garb, *i.e.,* invested with the authority of the Christian Scriptures, *e.g., Precepts of Jesus.*

(b) and *(c).* What the Raja thought was really the meaning of the original Christian Scriptures (the work of Christian Restoration and Interpretation) and his controversies with the missionaries.

This work of Christian Restoration has borne fruit in helping forward the movement of Unitarian Christianity, so much so that the Raja holds a high and honoured place with Price, Priestly, Channing in the history of that movement.

Here that Raja, accepting the infallibility of the Bible, has to admit miracles including Resurrection, Mediatorship and Saviourship of Christ, his supremacy over all creatures, his pronouncing final doom or judgment, etc. He, however, seeks to disprove from the Bible the Divinity or dual nature of Christ, and the Trinity of the Godhead; and also the doctrines of Vicarious Atonement and Imputation. The miracles are ignored as non-religious and the Mediatorship and Saviourship explained in such a way as to become comparatively harmless from the rationalist's point of view, and as compatible with the latter as possible. (*e.g., The Three Appeals to the Christian Public,* The *Missionary and Chinese Converts, etc.)* The latter, a master-piece of Satire quite worthy of Voltaire at his best.

The Raja was so doctrinaire. He had a wholesome historical instinct, a love of concrete embodiments and institutions, such as characterise, the born religious and social reformer. A rationalist and universalist in every pulse of his

being, he was no believer in the cult of the worship of Reason, of naked Logical Abstractions. The universal guiding principle of the Love of God and man he sought and found in the Scriptures of the nations, and rose from the barren religion of Nature or Theo-Philanthropy of his eighteenth century predecessors to a liberal interpretation and acceptance of the Historic Revelation and Scriptures, not indeed in any supernatural sense, but as emodiments of the collective sense, of races of mankind, and as conserving and focussing that principle of Authority, which, in this mundane state, is an indispensable cement and foundation, an elementary factor of communal life, whether in the social, the political or the religious sphere.

" I have often lamented," says the Raja, " that in our general researches into theological truth, we are subject to the conflict of so many obstacles. When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other; and when discouraged by this curcumstance we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is alone to conduct us to the object of our pursuit. We often find that instead of facilitating our endeavours or clearing up our perplexities, it only serves to generate an universal doubt incompatible with principles on which our comfort and happiness mainly depend. The best method perhaps is neither to give ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other, by a proper use of the lights furnished by both endeavour to improve our intellectual and moral faculties."

This has the ring of the " large utterance of the early gods," and in its sanity, its balance, its nice mental equipoise, is beyond the reach of the Voltaires and Volneys of the world. This rationalistic Raja has verily been the founder and father of the nineteenth century conception of the Scriptures which discards supernaturalism and miracle monging, and yet retains and reassures for the race those precious treasures, those storehouses of moral and spiritual force, and of living Authority. The Raja's method of interpretation was at once a marvellous ' Novum Organum' applied to the scriptures of the world, and a sure instinct anticipating the historic and evolutionary method of modern sociology. The essential and vital principles held in solution in the Hindu and Christian cultures and Civilizations precipitated themselves. The spirit of reason and universalism was breathed into those ancient bodies for giving them an immortality of youth and fresh national vigour.

INTRODUCTION.



SEVERAL of my friends having expressed a wish to be possessed of copies of my Translation of the Veds, and Controversies with those Brahmuns who are advocates for idolatry) I have collected for republication such of those tracts as I could find, either among my own papers of those of my friends who happened to have brought them from India, and now offer them to the public in their original form.

I feel induced to set forth here, briefly, the substance of these writings, *to* facilitate the comprehension of their purport, as being foreign to the generality of European readers. The Veda (or properly speaking, the spiritual parts of them) uniformly declare, that man is prone by nature, or by habit, to reduce the object or objects of his veneration and worship (though admitted to be unknown) to tangible forms, ascribing to such objects attributes, supposed excellent according to his own notions; whence idolatry, gross or refined, takes its origin, and perverts the true course of intellect to vain fancies. These authorities, therefore, hold out precautions against framing a deity after human imagination, and recommend mankind to direct all researches towards the surrounding objects, viewed either collectively or individually, bearing in mind their regular, wise, and wonderful combinations and arrangements; since such researches cannot fail, they affirm, to lead an unbiassed mind to a notion of a Supreme Existence,

who so sublimely designs and disposes of them, as" is every where traced through the universe. The same Veds represent rites and external worship addressed to the planets and elementary objects, or personified abstract notions, as well as to deified heroes, as intended for persons of mean capacity; but enjoin spiritual devotion, as already described, benevolence, and self-control, as the only means of securing bliss.

RAMMOHUN ROY.

London, July 23, 1832.

P.S.—In all the following Translations, except the Cena Upanishad, the mode of spelling Sanscrit words in English, adopted by Dr. J. B. Gilchrist, has been observed.

TRANSLATION

OF AN

ABRIDGMENT

OF

THE VEDANT,

OR

THE RESOLUTION OF ALL THE VEDS;

THE

MOST CELEBRATED AND REVERED WORK OF

Brahminical Theology;

ESTABLISHING THE UNITY OP THE SUPREME BEING; AND THAT

HE ALONE

IS THE OBJECT 'OF PROPITIATION AND WORSHIP.

CALCUTTA:

1816.

TO

THE BELIEVERS OF THE ONLY TRUE GOD.

:0:

THE greater part of Brahmins, as well as of other sects of Hindoos, are quite incapable of justifying that idolatry which they continue to practise. When questioned on the subject, in place of adducing reasonable arguments in support of their conduct, they conceive it fully sufficient to quote their ancestors as positive authorities! And some of them are become very ill-disposed towards me, because I have forsaken idolatry for the worship of the true and eternal God! In order, therefore, to vindicate my own faith and that of our early forefathers, I have been endeavouring, for some time past, to convince my countrymen of the true meaning of our sacred books; and to prove, that my aberration deserves not the opprobrium which some unreflecting persons have been so ready to throw upon me.

The whole body of the Hindoo Theology, Law, and Literature, is contained in the Veds, which are affirmed to be coeyal with the creation! These works are extremely voluminous, and being written in the most elevated and metaphorical style, are, as may be well supposed, in many passages seemingly confused and contradictory. Upwards of two thousand years ago, the great Byas, reflecting on the perpetual difficulty arising from these sources, composed with great discrimination a complete and compendious abstract of the whole; and also reconciled those texts which appeared to stand at variance. This work he termed *The Vedant,* which, compounded of two Sungscrit words, signifies *The Resolution of all the, Veds.* It has continued to be most highly revered by all Hindoos, and in place of the more diffuse arguments of the Veds, is always referred to as equal authority. But from its being

concealed within the dark curtain of the Sungscrit language, and the Brahmins permitting themselves alone to interpret, or even to touch any book of the kind, the Vedant, although perpetually quoted, is little known to the public: and the practice of few Hindoos indeed bears the least accordance with its precepts !

In pursuance of my vindication, I have to the best of my abilities translated this hitherto unknown work, as well as an abridgment thereof, into the Hindoostanee and Bengalee languages, and distributed them, free of cost, among my own countrymen, as widely as circumstances have possibly allowed. The present is an endeavour to render an abridgment of the same into English, by which I expect to prove to my European friends, that the superstitious practices which deform the Hindoo religion have. nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates !

I have observed, that both in their writings and conversation, many Europeans feel a wish to palliate and soften the features of Hindoo idolatry; and are inclined to inculcate, that all objects of worship are considered by their votaries as emblematical representations of the Supreme Divinity! If this were indeed the case, I might perhaps be led into some examination of the subject: but the truth is, the Hindoos of the present day have no such views of the subject, but firmly believe in the real existence of innumerable gods- and goddesses, who possess, in their own departments, full and inde-, pendent power; and to propitiate them, and not the true God, are temples erected and ceremonies performed. There can be no doubt,however, and it is my whole design to prove, that every rite has its derivation from the allegorical adoration of the true Deity ; but at the present day all this is forgotten, and among many it is even heresy to mention it!

I hope it will not be presumed that I intend to establish the perference of my faith over, that of other men. The result of controversy on such a subject, however multiplied, must

be ever unsatisfactory; for the reasoning faculty, which leads men to certainty in things within its reach, produces no effect on questions beyond its comprehension. 1 do no more than assert, that, if correct reasoning, and the dictates of common sense, induce the belief of a wise, uncreated Being, who is the Supporter and Ruler of the boundless universe, we should also consider him the Most Powerful and Supreme Existence ;—far surpassing our powers of comprehension or description !--And, although men of *uncultivated* minds, and even some *learned* individuals, (but in this one point blinded by *prejudice,)* readily choose, as the object of their adoration, anything which they can always see, and which they pretend to *feel;* the absurdity of such conduct is not thereby in the least degree diminished.

My constant reflections on the inconvenient, or rather injurious rites, introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindoo idolatry, which, more than any other Pagan worship, destroys the texture of society, together with compassion for my countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort *to* awaken them from their dream of error; and by making them acquainted with their scriptures, enable them to contemplate with true devotion the unity and omnipresence of Nature's God.

By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahmun, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches, even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong, and whose temporal advantage depends upon the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear, trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice—perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate, whetever men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation : my motives are acceptable to that Being who beholds in secret and compensates openly!

ABRIDGMENT

OF

THE VEDANT.



THE illustrious Byas,* in his celebrated work, the Vedant, insinuates in the first text, that it is absolutely necessary for mankind to acquire knowledge respecting the Supreme Being, who is the subject of discourse in all the Veds, and the Vedant, as well as in the other systems of Theology. But he found, from the following passages of the Veds, that this inquiry is limited to very narrow bounds, *viz.*, "The Supreme Being is not comprehensible by vision, or by any other of the organs of sense; nor can he be conceived by means of devotion, or virtuous practices."† "He sees everything, though never seen; hears everything, though never directly heard of. He is neither short, nor is he long;‡ inaccessible to the reasoning faculty; not to be compassed by description; beyond the limits of the explanation of the Ved, or of human conception!"§ Byas, also, from the result of various arguments coinciding with the Ved, found that the accurate and positive knowledge of the Supreme Being is not within the boundary of comprehension; *i.e.*, that *what*, and h*ow*, the Supreme Being is, cannot be definitely ascertained. He has therefore, in the second text, explained the Supreme Being by his effects and works, without attempting to define his essence; in like manner as

*** The greatest of the Indian theologists, philosophers, and poets, was begotten by the celebrated Purasur and Sutyubutee. Byas collected and divided the Veds into certain books and chapters, he is therefore commonly called Vedu Byas. The word Byas is composed *et* the preposition *bi* and the verb *uss* to divide.**

† Munduc. ‡ Brih'datutmuc* § Cuthubulhv

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we, not knowing the real nature of the sun, explain him to be the cause of the succession of days and epochs. "He by whom the birth, existence, and annihilation of the world is regulated, is the Supreme Being!" We see the multifarious, wonderful universe, as well as the birth, existence, and annihilation, of its different parts ; hence, we naturally infer the existence of a Being who regulates the whole, and call him the Supreme : in the same manner as from the sight of a pot, we conclude the existence of its artificer. The V*ed,* *i*n like manner, declares the Supreme Being thus : " He *from* whom the uiversal world proceeds, who is the Lord of the Universe, and whose work is the uiverse,is the Supreme Being! "*

The *Ved is n*ot supposed to be an eternal Being, though Sometimes dignified with such an epithet; because its being created by the Supreme Being is declared in the Same Ved thus *:* *"All th*e texts and parts of the Ved were created :" and also in the third text of the Vedant, God is declared to be the cause of all Veds.

The *void space* is not conceived to be the independent cause of the world, notwithstanding the following declaration of the Ved, " The world proceeds from the void space ;"† for the Ved again declares, "By the Supreme Being the void Spce was produced." And foe Vedant‡ says; "As the Supreme Being is evidently declared in the Ved to be foe cause Of the Void space, air, and fire, neither of them can be supposed to fee the independent cause of foe universe."

Neither is *air* allowed to fee the Lord of the Universe, although the Ved says in one instance, " In air every existing creature is absorbed ; for the Ved again affirms, that " Breath, the intellectual power, all the internal and external senses, the Void space, air, light, water, and the extensive earth, proceeded from the Supreme Being!" The Vedant§ also says :. " God is meant by the following text of the Ved, as a Being more

* Taittureeu. † Chhandoggu.

‡ *Fourteenth text,* 4th sec. tsl chap. 80', 3d, Ist

extensive than all the extension of space;" *viz.*, "*That* breath is greater than the extension of space in all directions," as it occurs in the Ved, after the discourse concerning common breath is concluded.

Light, of whatever description, is not inferred to be the Lord of the Universe, from the following assertion of the Ved: "The 'pure Light of all lights' is the Lord of all creatures;" for the Ved again declares,* that "The sun and all other imitate God, and borrow their light from him;" and the same declaration is found in the Vedant.†

Neither can *Nature* be construed by the following texts of the Ved, to be the independent cause of the world: *viz.*, "Man having known *that* Nature which is an eternal being, without a beginning or an end, is delivered from the grasp of death!" and "Nature operates herself!" because the Ved affirms that "No being is superior or equal to God!"‡ and the Ved commands, "Know God alone!"§ and the Vedant|| thus declares: "Nature is not the Creator of the world, not being represented so by the Ved," for it expressly says, "God has by his sight created the Universe." Nature is an insensible Being, she is, therefore, void of sight or intention, and consequently unable to create the regular world.¶

Atoms are not supposed to be the cause of the world, notwithstanding the following declaration: "This (Creator) is the most minute Being." Because an atom is an insensible particle, and from the above authority it is proved, that no Being void of understanding can be the author of a system so skilfully arranged.

The soul cannot be inferred from the following texts to be the Lord of the Universe, nor the independent Ruler of the intellectual powers; *viz.*, "The Soul being joined to the resplendent Being, enjoys by itself," "God and the Soul enter the small void space of the heart;" because the Ved declares

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* Moonduc. † 22nd, 3rd, 1st. ‡ Cuthu.
§ Moonduc. || 5th, 1st, 1st. ¶ Cuthu.

that "He (God) resides in the soul as its Ruler," and that "The Soul being joined to the gracious Being, enjoys happiness."* The Vedant also says, "the sentient soul is not understood to reside as ruler in the earth, because in both texts of the Ved it is differently declared from that Being who rules the earth :" *viz.*, " He (God) resides in the faculty of the understanding," and " He, who resides in the Soul, etc."

No *god or goddess of the earth* can be meant by the following text as the ruler of the earth, viz.,† " He who resides in the Earth, and is distinct from the Earth, and whom the Earth does not know," etc.; because the Ved affirms that, " This (God alone) is the ruler of internal sense, and is the eternal Being;" and the same is asserted in the Vedant.‡

By the text which begins with the following sentence: *viz.*, " This is the Sun," and by several other texts testifying the dignity of the Sun, he is not supposed to be the original cause of the universe, because the Ved declares, that§ " He who residecaei the Sun (as his Lord) is distinct from the sun," and the Vedant declares the same.||

'In like manner none of the celestial gods can be inferred from the various assertions of the Ved, respecting their deities respectively, to be the independent cause of the Universe ; because the Ved repeatedly affirms, that " All the Veds prove nothing but the unity of the Supreme Being." By allowing' the divinity of more than one Being, the following positive affirmations of the Ved, relative to the unity of God, become false and absurd : " God is indeed one and has no second."¶ "There is none but the Supreme Being possessed of universal knowledge."** " He who is without any figure, and beyond the limit of description, is the Supreme Being."†† "Appellations and figures of all kinds are innovations." And from the authority of many other texts it is evident that any being that

* 20th, 2nd, 1st. † Brih'darunnuc. ‡ 18th, 2nd, 1st.
§ Brih'daninnuc. || 21st, 1st, 1st. ¶ Cutbu.
** Brih'darunnuc* †† Chhandoggu,

bears figure, and is subject to description, cannot be the eternal, independent cause of the. universe.

The Veds not only call the celestial representations Deities, but also in many instances give the divine epithet of the mind, diet, void space, quadruped animal, slaves, and flymen : as, " The Supreme Being is a quadruped animal in one place, and in another he is full of glory. The mind is the Supreme Being, it is to be worshipped," " God is the letter 'ku' as well as 'khu,' and God is in the shape of slaves and that of flymen." The Ved has allegorically represented God in the figure of the Universe, *viz.*, " Fire is his head, the sun and the moon are his two eyes,"* etc. And also the Ved calls God the void space of the heart, and declares him to be smaller than the grain of paddy and barley ; but from the foregoing quotations neither any of the celestial Gods, nor any existing creature, should be considered the Lord of the Universe, because † the third chapter of the Vedant explains the reason for these secondary assertions thus: " By these appellations of the Ved, which denote the diffusive spirit of the Supreme Being equally over all .creatures by means of extension, his omnipresence is established :" so the Ved says, "All that exists is indeed God,"‡ *i.e.,* nothing bears true existence excepting God, " and whatever we smell or taste is the Supreme Being," *i.e.*, the existence of whatever thing that appears to us rdies on the existence of God. It is indisputably evident that none of these metaphorical representations, which arise from the elevated style in wihch all the Veds are written, were designed to be viewed in any other light than mere allegory. Should individuals be acknowledged to be separate deities, there would be a necessity for acknowledging many independent creators of the world, which is directly contrary to common sense, and to the repeated authority of the Ved. The Vedant§ also declares, " That Being which is distinct from

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* Moon due. † 38th text, 2nd sec.

‡ Chhandoggu. § nth, 2nd, 3rd.

matter, and *from* those Which are contained in matter, is not various, because he is declared by all the Veds to be *one* be yond description;" and it, is again;stated that" The Ved has declared: the Supreme Being to; be more understanding ;"* also in the third chapter is found-that? "The Ved having at first explained the Supreme Being by different epithets, begins with the word Uthu, or now,"and declares that "All descriptions which I have used *to* describes the Supreme Being are incorrect," because he by no means can be described; and so it is stated in the stored commentaries of the Ved.

The fourteenth text of the second sect., of the third chapter of the Vedant declares,, "It being:directly represented by the Ved, that the Supreme Being bears no figure nor *form;"* and the following texts of the Ved assert the same, *viz.*, "That true-Bringrwas".before all."† "The Supreme Being has no feet, but extends everywhere; has no hands; yet holds everything; has no eyes, yet sees all that is; has no ears, yet hears everything: that passes." "His existence had no cause." "He is the smallest of the small, and the greatest of the great.. and yet is, in fact, neither small nor great!"

In answer to the following question, viz., "How can the Supreme Being be supposed to be distinct from,and above all existing creatures, and at the same time omnipresent ? How is? it possible that he should be described by properties inconceivable by reason, as seeing without eye, and? hearing without ear?" To *these* questions the Vedant, in chapter second; replies "In God are all sorts of power and Splendour." And the following passages of the Ved also declare the same: "God is all-powerful ;"‡ and "It is by His supremacy that he is in possession of all powers;" i.e., what may be impossible for us is not impossible for God, who is the Almighty, and the sole Regulator of the Universe.

* 16,2nd, 3rd † hliandogginC

‡ Shyetasliyutur.

Some celestial Gods have, in different instances, declared themselves to be independent deities, and also the object of worship; but these declarations were owing to their thoughts being abstracted from themselves and their being entirely absorbed in divine reflection.* The Vedant declares: "This exhortation of Indru (or the god of atmosphere) respecting his divinity, to be indeed agreeable to the authorities of the Ved;" that is, "Every one, on having lost all self-consideration in consequence of being united with divine reflection, may speak as assuming to be the Supreme Being; like Bamdev (a celebrated Brahmun) who, in consequence of such self-forgetfulness, declared himself to have created the Sun, and Munoo, the next person to Brahma." It is therefore optional with every one of the celestial Gods, as well as with every individual, to consider himself as God, under this state of self-forgetfulness and unity with the Divine reflection, as the Ved says, "You are that true Being" (when you lose all self-consideration), and "O God, I am nothing but you." The sacred commentators have made the same observation, *viz.*, "I am nothing but true Being, and am pure Understanding, full of eternal happiness, and am by nature free from worldly effects." But in consequence of this reflection, none of them can be acknowledged to be the cause of the universe or the object of adoration.

God is the efficient cause of the universe, as a potter is of earthen pots; and he is also the material cause of it, the same as the earth is the material cause of the different earthen pots, or as a rope, at an inadvertent view taken for a snake, is the material cause of the conceived existence of the snake, which appears to be true by the support of the real existence of the rope. So says the Vedant,† "God is the efficient cause of the Universe, as well as the material cause thereof (as a spider of its web)," as the Ved has positively declared, "That from a

* 30th, 1st, 1st.
† 23rd, 8th, 1st.

knowledge of God alone, a knowledge of every existing thing proceeds." Also the Ved compares the knowledge respecting the Supreme Being to a knowledge of the earth, and the knowledge respecting the different species existing in the universe to the knowledge of earthen pots, which declaration and comparison prove the unity between the Supreme Being and the universe; and by the following declarations of the Ved, *viz.*, " The Supreme Being has by his sole intention created the Universe," it is evident that God is the wilful agent of all that can have existence.

As the Ved says, that the Supreme Being intended (at the time of creation) to extend himself, it is evident that the Supreme Being is the origin of all matter, and its various appearances; as the reflection of the sun's meridian rays on sandy plains is the cause of the resemblance of an extended sea. The Ved says, that " all figures and their appellations are mere inventions, and that the Supreme Being alone is real existence," consequently things that bear figure and appellation cannot be supposed the cause of the universe.*

The following texts of the Ved, *viz.*, " Crishnu (the god of preservation) is greater than all the celestial gods, to whom the mind should be applied." " We all worship Muhadev (the god of destruction)." "We adore the sun." "I worship the most revered Varun (the god of the sea)." " Dost thou worship me," says Air, '"who am the eternal and universal life." " Intellectual power is God, which should be adored;" and "Oodgueet (or a certain part of the Ved) should be worshipped." These, as well as several other texts of the same nature, are not real command* to worship the persons and things aboVe-mentioned, but only direct those who are unfortunately incapable of adoring the invisible Supreme Being, to apply their minds to any visible thing, rather than allow them to remain idle. The Vedant also states, that " The declaration of the Ved,* that those who

*** 7th, Ist, 3rd,**

Worship the celestial gods are the food of such gods," is an allegorical expression, and only means that they are comforts to the celestial gods, as food is to mankind; for he who has no faith in the Supreme Being is rendered subject to these gods. The Ved affirms the same: *viz.*, "He who worships any god excepting the Supreme Being, and thinks that he is distinct and inferior to that god, knows nothing, and is considefed as a * domestic beast of these gods.' " And the Vedant also asserts; *vis.*, " The worship authorized by all the Veds is of one nature, as the direction for the worship of the only Supreme Being is invariably found in every part of the Ved: and the epithets the ' Supreme and the Omnipresent Being,' etc., commonly imply " God alone."*

The following passages of the Ved affirm that God is the sole object of worship, *viz.*,† " Adore God alone." " Know God alone; give up all other discourse." And the Vedant says, that " It is found in the Veds,‡ 'That none but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man.' "

Moreover, the Vedant declares that " Byas is of opinion that the adoration of the Supreme Being is required of mankind as well of the celestial gods; because the possibility of self-resignation to God is equally observed in both mankind and the celestial deities."§ The Ved also states,|| that "Of the celestial gods, of the pious Brahmuns, and of men in general, that person who understands and believes the Almighty Being, will be absorbed in him." It is therefore concluded that the celestial gods and mankind have an equal duty in divine worship; and besides it is proved from the following authority of the Ved, that any man who adore the Supreme Being is adored by all the celestial gods, *viz.*, " All the celestial gods worship him who applies his mind to the Supreme Being."¶

* 1st, 3rd, 3rd. † Brih'darunnuc. ‡ 67th, 3rd, 3rd.
§361b, 3rd, 1st.. || Brih'darunnbc, ¶ Chhandoggu.

The Ved now illustrates the mode in which we should worship the Supreme Being, *viz.*, " To God we should approach, of him we should hear, of him we should think, and to him we should attempt to approximate."* The Vedant also elucidates the subject thus : " The three latter directions in the above quoted text, are conducive to the first, *viz.*, 'Approaching to God.' " These three are in reality included in the first (as the direction for collecting fire in the worship of fire), for we cannot approach to God without hearing and thinking of him, nor without attempting to make our approximation ; and the last, *viz.*, attempting to approximate to God, is required until we have approached him. By hearing of God is meant hearing his declarations, which establish his unity ; and by thinking of him is meant thinking of the contents of his law; and by attempting to approximate to him is meant attempting to apply our minds to that true Being on which the diffusive existence of the universe relies, in order that by means of the constant practice of this attempt we may approach to him. The Vedant states,† that " Constant practice of devotion is necessary, it being represented so by the Ved ;" and also adds that " We should adore God till we approach to him, and even then not forsake his adoration, such authority being found in the Ved."

The Vedant shews that moral principle is a part of the adoration of *God,viz.,* " A command over our passions and over the external senses of the body and good acts, are declared by the Ved to be indispensable in the mind's approximation to God, they should therefore be strictly taken care of, and attended to, both previously and subsequently to such approximation to the Supreme Being;"*i.e.,* we should not indulge our evil propensities, but should endeavour to have entire control over them. Reliance on, and self-resignation to, the only true Being, with an aversion to wordly considera-

* 47th 4th 3d † Ist,Ist 4th, ‡ 27th, 4th, 3rd.

tions, are included in the good acts above alluded to. The adoration of the Supreme Being produces eternal beatitude, as well as all desired advantages; as the Vedant declares: " It is the firm opinion of Byas that from devotion to God all the desired consequences proceed ; "* and it is thus often re* presented by the Ved, " He who is desirous of prosperity should worship the Supreme Being."† " He who knows God thoroughly adheres unto God." " The souls of the deceased forefathers of him who adores the true Being alone, enjoy freedom by his mere wish."‡ " All the celestial gods worship him who applies his mind to the Supreme Being; and " He, who sincerely adores the Supreme Being;" is exempted from further transmigration."

A pious householder is entitled to the adoration of God equally with an Uti ;§ The Vedant says, that " A householder may be allowed the performance of all the ceremonies attached to the (Brahminical) religion, and also the fulfilling of the devotion of God : the fore-mentioned mode of worshipping the Supreme Being, therefore, is required of a householder possessed of moral " principles,:"|| And the Ved declares, that "the celestial gods, and householders of strong faith, and professional Utis, are alike."

It is optional to those who have faith in God alone, to observe and attend to the rules and rites prescribed by the Ved, applicable to the different classes of Hindoos, and to their different religious orders respectively. But in case of the true believers neglecting those rites they are not liable to any blame whatever; as the Vedant says, " Before acquiring the true knowledge of God, it is proper for man to attend to

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* Ist 4th, 3rd. † Monduc. ‡ Chhandoggu.

§ The highest among the four sects of Brahmuns, who, according to the religious order, are bound to forsake all wordly considerations, and to spend their time in the sole adoration of God,

|| 28th, 4th, 3rd.

the laws and "rules laid down by the Ved for" different classes, according to their different professions; because the Ved declares the performance of these rules to be the the cause of the mind's purification, and its faith in God, and compares it with a saddle-horse, which helps a man to arrive at the wished for goal.'*' And the Vedant also says, that " Man may acquire the true knowledge of God even without observing the rules and rites prescribed by the Ved for each class of Hindoos, as it is found in the Ved that many persons who had neglected the performance of the Brahminical rites and ceremonies owing to their perpetual attention to the adoration of the Supreme Being, acquired the true knowledge respecting the Deity."t The Vedant again more clearly states that, " It is equally found in the Ved that some people, though they had their entire faith in God alone, yet performed both the worship of God and the ceremonies prescribed by the Ved; and that some others neglected them, and merely worshipped God."% The following texts of the Ved fully explain the subject, *viz.,* " Junuku (one of the noted devotees) had performed Yugnyu (or the adoration of the celestial gods through fire) with the gift of a considerable sum of money, as a fee to the holy Brahmuns, and many learned true believers never worshipped fire, nor any celestial god through fire,"

Notwithstanding it is optional with those who have their faith in the only God, to attend to the prescribed ceremonies or to neglect them entirely, the Vedant prefers the former to the latter, because the Ved says that attendance to the religious ceremonies conduces to the attainment of the Supreme Being,

Although the Ved says, " That he who has true faith in the omnipresent Supreme Being may eat all that exists,"§ *i.e.,* is not bound to enquire what is his food, or who prepares it,

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* 36th, 4th, 3rd. † 36th, 4th, 3rd.
‡ 9th, 4th, 3rd. § Chhandoggu.

nevertheless the Vedant limits that authority thus: "The above-mentioned authority of the Ved for eating all sorts of food should only be observed at the time of distress, because it is found in the Ved, that Chacraunu (a celebrated Brahmun) ate the meat cooked by the elephant-keepers during a famine."* It is concluded, that he acted according to the 'above-stated authority of the Ved, only at the time of distress.

Devotion to the Supreme Being is not limited to any holy place or sacred country, as the Vedant says, " In any place wherein the mind feels itself undisturbed, men should worship God; because no specific authority for the choice of any particular place of worship is found in the Ved,"† which declares, " In any place which renders the mind easy, man should adore God."

It is of no consequence to those who have true belief in God, whether they die while the sun is in the north or south of the equator, as the Vedant declares that " Any one who has faith in the only God, dying even when the sun may be south of the equator,‡ his soul shall proceed from the body, through Sookhumna (a vein which, as the Brahmuns suppose, passes through the navel up to the brain), and approaches to the Supreme Being.§" The Ved also positively asserts that " He who in the life, was devoted to the Supreme Being, shall (after death) be absorbed in him, and again be neither liable to birth nor death, reduction nor augmentation."

The Ved begins and concludes with the three peculiar and mysterious epithets of God,viz., forst, OM; second,TUT; third. SUT. The first of these signifies " *That* Being, which preserves, destroys, and creates:" The second implies " *That* only Being, which is neither male nor female!" Which is

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* 28th, 4th, 3rd, † 11th, 1st, 4th.

‡ It is believed by the Brahmuns, that any one who dies while the sun is south of the equator, cannot enjoy eternal beatitude.

§ 20th, 2nd, 4th.

neither male or female. The third announces "*The true being!*" These collective terms simply affirm, that ONE UNKNOWN, TRUE BEING IS THE CREATOR, PRESERVER. AND DESTROYER OF THE UNIVERSE ! !!

TRANSLATION

OF THE

MOONDUK OPUNISHUD

OF THE

UTHURVU-VED,

ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF THE CELEBRATED

SHUNKURACHARYU.

CALCUTTA:

1819.

INTRODUCTION.

DURING the intervals between my controversial engagements with idolators as well as with advocates for idolatry, I translated several of the ten Oopunishuds, of which the Vedanlu or principal part of the Veds consists, and of which the Shareeruk-Meemangsa, commonly called the Vedant-Durshun, composed by the celebrated Vyas, is explanatory; I have now taken the opportunity of further leisure to publish a translation of the Moonduk-Oopunishud. An attentive perusal of this, as well as of the remaining books of the Vedantu, will, I trust, convince every unprejudiced mind, that they, with great consistency, inculcate the unity of God; instructing men, at the same time, in the pure mode of adoring him in spirit. It wilt also appear evident that the Veds, although they tolerate idolatry as the last provision for thosa who are totally incapable of raising their minds to the contemplation of the invisible God of nature, yet repeatedly urge the relinquishment of the rites of idol worship, and the adoption of a purer system of religion, on the express grounds, that the observance of idolatrous rites can never be productive of eternal beatitude. These are left to be practised by such persons only as, notwithstanding the constant teaching of spiritual guide's, cannot be brought to see perspicuously the majesty of God through the works of nature.

The public will, I hope, be assured that nothing but the natural inclination of the ignorant towards the warship of objects resembling their own nature, and to the external forms of rites palpable to their grosser senses, joined to the self-interested motives of their pretended guides, has rendered the generality of the Hindoo community (in defiance of their sacred books) devoted to idol-worship;—the source of

prejudice and superstition, and of the total destruction of moral principle, as countenancing criminal intercourse,* suicide,† female murder,‡ and human sacrifice. Should my labours prove in any degree the means of diminishing the extent of those evils, I shall ever deem myself most amply rewarded.

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* *Vide* Defence of Hindoo Theism.
† Wife Introduction to the Cena-Upanishad,
% *Vide* Treatise on Widow-burning.

THE

MOONDUR-OPUNISHUD

OF THE

UTHURVU-VED.



SECTION I, MOONDUKUM I.

BRUHMA, the greatest of celestial deities, and executive creator and preserver of the world, came into form; he instructed Uthurvu, his eldest son, in the knowledge respecting the Supreme Being, on which all sciences rest. Uthurvu communicated formerly to Ungir what Bruhmá taught him: Ungir imparted the same knowledge to one of the descendants of Bhurudwaju *called* Sutyuvahu, who conveyed the doctrine so handed down to Ungirus. Shounuku, a wealthy householder, having in the prescribed manner approached Ungirus, asked, " Is there any being by whose knowledge alone the whole universe may be *immediately* known?" He (Ungirus) then replied: " Those who have a thorough knowledge of the Veds, say that it should be understood that there are two sorts of knowledge ; one superior, and the other inferior: There are the Rig-ved, Ujoor-ved, Samu-ved, and Uthurvu-ved ; and also *their subordinate parts, consisting of* Shiksha, or a treatise on pronunciation ; Kulpu or the science that teaches the details of rites according to the different branches of the Veds; Vydkurnu, or grammar; Nirooktu, or explanation of the peculiar terms of the Veds; Ch'hundus, or prosody; and Jyotish, or astronomy: *which all* belong to the Inferior kind of knowledge. Now the superior kind *is conveyed by the Oopunishuds and* is that through which absorption into the eternal Supreme Being may be obtained That

Supreme Being, *who is the subject of the superior learning,* is beyond the apprehension of the senses, and out of the reach of the corporeal organs of action, and is without origin, colour, or magnitude; and has neither eye nor ear, nor has he hand or foot. He is everlasting, all-pervading, omnipresent, absolutely incorporeal, unchangeable, and it is he whom wise men consider as the origin of the universe. In the same way as the cobweb is created and absorbed by the spider *indepen* dently of exterior origin,* as vegetables proceed from the earth, and hair and nails from animate creatures, so the Universe is produced by the eternal Supreme Being."

From his omniscience the Supereme Being resolves to create the Universe, Then nature, *the apparent cause of the world,* is produced by him. From her the prior operating sensitive particle of the world, styled Bruhmi, the source of the faculties, proceeds, *From the faculties* the five elements *are produced; thence spring* the *seven* divisions of the world, whereon ceremonial rites, with their consequences, are brought forth. By him who knows all things, collectively and distinctly, whose knowledge and will are the only means of all his actions, Bruhma, name, and form, and all that vegetates, are produced.

End of the First Section of the Ist Moondukum,

SECTION I.—*Continued.*

THOSE rites,* the prescription of which wise men, *such as Vushisthu, and others* found in the Veds, are truly the means *of producing good consequences.* They have been performed in various manners by three sects among Brahmuns, *namely, Udhuryoo, or those who are well versed in the Ujoor-ved; Oodgata, or the sect who know thoroughly the Samu-ved; and Hota, those Brahmuns that have a perfect knowledge of the Rig-ved.* You all continue to perform them, as long as you feel a desire to enjoy gratifications attainable from them. This practice of performing rites is the way which leads you to the benefits you expect to derive from your works.

Fire being augmented when its flame waves, *the observer of rites* shall offer oblations to deities in the middle of the waving flame.

If observance of the sacred fire be not attended with the rites required to be performed on the days of new and full moon, and during the four months of the rains, and in the autumn and spring; and be also not attended with hospitality and due regard to time or the worship of Vushyudevu, and be fulfilled without regard to prescribed forms, it will deprive the worshipper of the enjoyments which he might otherwise expect in his seven future mansions.

Kalee, Kuralee, Munojuva, Soolohita, Soodho-omruvurna, Sphoolinginee, Vishwuroochee, are the *seven names of the* seven waving points of the flame.

He who offers oblations at the prescribed time in those illuminating and waving points of fire, is carried by the oblations so offered through the rays of the Sun to the Heaven where Indru, prince of the celestial gods, reigns. The illuminating oblations, while carrying the observer of rites through

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* In the beginning of this Section, the author treats of the subject of the inferior knowledge; and in the conclusion he introduces that of the superior doctrine, which he continues throughout **the** whole Oopunishud.

the rays of the Sun, *invite him* to heaven, *saying,* "Come in! come in!" and entertaining him with pleasing conversation, and treating him with veneration, say to him, "This is the summit of the heavens, the fruit of your good works."

The eighteen members of rites and sacrifices, *void of the true knowledge,* are infirm and perishable. Those ignorant persons who consider them as the source of real bliss, shall, after the enjoyment of future gratification, undergo transmigrations. Those fools who, immersed in ignorance, *that is, the foolish practice of rites,* consider themselves to be wise and learned, wander about, repeatedly subjecting themselves to *birth, disease, death, and other* pains, like blind men when guided by a blind *man.*

Engaged in various manners of rites and sacrifices, the Ignorant are sure of obtaining their objects: but as the observers of such rites, from their excessive desire of fruition, remain destitute of a knowledge of God, they, afflicted with sorrows, descend to this world after the time of their celestial gratification is expired. Those complete fools believe, that the rites prescribed by the Veds in performing sacrifices, and those laid down by the Smrities at the digging of wells and other pious liberal actions, are the most beneficial, and have no idea that a knowledge *of, and faith in God,* are the only true sources of bliss. They, after death, having enjoyed the consequence of such rites on the summit of heaven, transmigrate in the human form, or in that of inferior animals, or of plants.

Mendicants and hermits, who residing in forests, live upon alms, as well as *householders* possessed of a portion of wisdom, practising religious austerities, the worship of Bruhmd and others, and exercising a control over the senses, freed from sins, ascend through the northern path* to the highest

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* According to Hindoo theologians, there are two roads that lead to distinct heavens, one northern, the other southern. The former is

part of heaven, where the immortal Bruhma, who is coeval with the world, assumes *his supremacy.*

Having taken into serious consideration the perishable nature of all objects *within the world*, which are acquirable from human works, a Brahmun shall cease to desire them ; reflecting within himself, that nothing *which is obtained through perishable means* can be expected to be eternal: hence what use of rites ? He then, with a view to acquire a knowledge of superior learning, shall proceed, with a load of wood in his hand, to a spiritual teacher who is versed in the doctrines of the Veds, and has firm faith in God. The wise teacher shall properly instruct his pupil so devoted to him, freed from the importunities of external senses, and possessed of tranquillity of mind, in the knowledge through which he may know the eternal Supreme Being.

End of the first Moondukum.

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the path to the habitation of Bruhma and the superior gods, and the latter to the heaven of Indru and the other inferior deities.

SECTION I, MOONDUKUM II.

HE, *the Subject of the superior knowledge,* alone is true As from a blazing fire thousands of sparks of the same nature proceed, so from the eternal Supreme Being (O beloved pupil)' various souls come forth, and again they return into him. He is immortal, and without form Or figure, omnipresent, pervading external and internal objects, unborn, without breath or individual mind, pure and superior to eminently exalted' nature.

From him the first sensitive particle, or the seed of the universe, individual intellect, all the senses and their *objects,* also vacuum, air, light, water, and the earth which contains all' things, proceed.

Heaven is his head, and the Sun and Moon ate his eyes; space in his ears, the celebrated Veds are his speech; air is his breath, the world is his intellect, and the earth is his feet;; *for* he is the soul of the whole universe.

By him the sky, which is illuminated by the Sun, *is produced;* cloud's, which have their origin from the effects of *the* Moon, *accumulating them in the sky,* bring forth vegetables' *in* the earth; Man imparts the essence *drawn from these vegetables,* to Woman; *then through the combination of such physical causes,* numerous offspring come forth front the omnipresent Supreme Being.

From him all the texts of the Veds, consisting of verses, musical compositions, and prose, proceed; *in like manner by htm* are produced Deeksha, orcertaiit preliminary ceremonies, and sacrifices, without sacrificial posts or with them; *fees* Justly, offered in sacrifices, time, and the principal person who institutes the performance of sacrifices and defrays their expenses; as well as future mansions, where the Moon effects' purification and where the Sun *shines.* By him Gods of several descriptions, all celestial beings subordinate to those Gods, mankind, animals, birds, both breath and peditum, wheat and barley, austerity, conviction, truth, duties of ascetics, and *rules*

for conducting human life. Were created. From him seven individual senses within the head proceed) as well as their seven respective inclinations towards their objects, their seven objects, and ideas acquired through them, and their seven organs *(twd eyes, two ears, the two passages of nose and mouth),* in which those senses are situated in every living creature, and which never cease to act except at the time of sleep.

From him, oceans and all mountains proceed, and various rivers flow; all vegetables, tastes, *(consisting of sweet, salt, pungent, bitter, sour, and astringent)* united with which the visible elementary substance encloses the corpuscle situate in the heart* The Supreme Existence is himself all—rites as well as their rewards. He therefore is the Supreme and Immortal, He who knows him (O beloved Pupil) as residing in the hearts *of all animate Beings,* disentangles the knot of ignorance in this world.

End of the First Section of the 2nd Moondukum.

*** This corpuscle is supposed to be constituted of all the various elements that enter into the composition of the animal frame. Within it the soul has its residence, and acting upon it, operates through its medium in the whole system. To this corpuscle the soul remains attached through all changes of being, until finally absorbed into the Supreme intelligence.**

MOONDUKUM II.—*Concluded.*

GOD, as being resplendent and most proximate *to all creatures,* is styled the operator in the heart; he is great and all-sustaining; for on him rest all existences, such as those that move, those that breathe, those that twinkle, and those that do not. Such is God. You all contemplate him as the support of all objects, visible and invisible, the chief end *of human pursuit.* He surpasses all human understanding, and is the most pre-eminent. He, who irradiates *the Sun and other bodies,* who is smaller than an atom, larger *than the world,* and in whom is the adode of all the divisions of the universe, and of all their inhabitants, is the eternal God ; the origin of breath, speech, and intellect, as well *as of all the senses.* He, *the origin of all the senses,* the true and unchangeable Supreme Being, should be meditated upon ; and do thou (O beloved pupil) apply constantly thy mind to him. Seizing the bow found in the Oopunishuds, the strongest of weapons, man shall draw the arrow *(of the soul),* sharpened by the constant application of mind *to God.* Do thou (O pupil), *being in the same practice,* withdrawing all *the senses from worldly objects,* through the mind directed towards the Supreme Being, hit the mark which is the eternal God. The word Om, *signifying God,* is represented as the bow, the Soul as the arrow, and the Supreme Being as its aim, which a man of steady mind should hit: he then shall be united to God as the arrow to its mark. In God, heaven, earth, and space reside, and also intellect, with breath and all the senses. Do you strive to know solely the ONE Supreme Being, and forsake all other discourse; because this *(a true knowledge respecting God)* is the only way to eternal beatitude. The veins of the body are inserted into the heart, like the radius of a wheel into its nave. There the Supreme Being, as the origin of the notion of individuality, and of its various circumstances, resides ; Him, through the help of Om, you all contemplate. Blessed be ye in crossing over the ocean of

dark ignorance to absorption into God. He who knows the universe collectively, distinctively, whose majesty is fully evident in the world, operates within the space of the heart, his luminous abode.

He is perceptible only by intellect; and removes the breath and corpuscle, *in which the soul resides,* from one substance to another; supporting intellectual faculties, he is seated in the heart. Wise men acquire a knowledge of him, who shines eternal, and the source of all happiness, through the pure knowledge *conveyed to them by the Veds and by spiritual fathers,* God, who is all in all, being known to man as the origin of intellect and self-consiousness, every desire of the mind ceases, all doubts are removed, and effects of the good or evil actions committed, now or in preceeding shapes, are totally annihilated. The Supreme Being, free from stain, devoid of figure or form, and entirely pure, the light of all lights, resides in the heart, his resplendently excellent seat: those *discriminating* men, who know him *as the origin of intellect and of self-conciousness,* are possessed of the real notion of God. Neither the sun nor the moon, nor yet the stars, can throw light on God: even the illuminating lightning cannot throw light upon him, much less can limited fire give him light: but they all imitate him, and all borrow their light from him. God alone is immortal: he extends before, behind, to the right, to the left, beneath and above. He is the Supreme and All-in-all.

End of the First Section of the Second Moondukum,

SECTION I,—MOONDUKUM III.

Two birds *(meaning God and the soul),* co-habitant and co-essential, reside unitedly in one tree, *which is the body.* One of them *(the soul)* consumes the variously tasted fruits of its actions; but the other *(God),* without partaking of them, witnessess *all events.*

The soul so pressed down in the body, being deluded with ignorance, grieves at its own insufficiency; but when it perceives its co-habitant, the adorable Lord *of the universe,** the origin of itself, and his glory, it feels relieved from grief and infatuation. When a wise man perceives the resplendent God, the Creator and Lord *of the universe,* and the omni-present prime Cause, he then, abandoning the consequences of good and evil works, becomes perfect, and obtains entire absorption. A wise man knowing God as perspicuously residing in all creatures, forsakes all idea of duality; *being convinced that there is only one real Existence, which is God.* He then directs all his senses towards God alone, the origin of self-consciousness, and on him exclusively he places his love, abstracting at the same time his mind from all worldly objects by constantly applying it to God: the person so devoted is reckoned the most perfect among the votaries of the Deity. Through strict veracity, the uniform direction of mind and senses, and through notions acquired from spiritual teachers, as well as by abstinence from sexual indulgence, Man should approach God, who, full of splendour and perfec-tion, works in the heart; and to whom only the votaries freed from passion and desire can approximate.

He who practises veracity prospers, and not he who speaks untruths : the way to eternal beatitude is open to him who without omission speaketh truth. This is that way through

*** The difference between God, the intellectual principle, and the Soul; the individual intellect, subsists as long as the idea of self-indivi-duality is retained ; like the distinction between finite and infinite space, which ceases as soon as the idea of particular figure is done away.**

which the saints, extricated from all desires, proceed to the Supreme Existence, the consequence of the observance of truth. He is great and incomprehensible by the senses, and consequently his nature is beyond human conception. He, though more subtlo than vacuum itself, shines in various ways. —*From those who do not know him,* he is at a greater distance than the limits of space, and *to those who acquire a knowledge of him,* he is most proximate ; and while residing in animate creatures he is perceived obscurely *by those mho apply their thoughts to him.* He is not perceptible by vision, nor is he describable by means of speech: neither can he be the object of any of the other organs of sense; nor can he be conceived by the help of austerities or religious rites: but a person whose mind is purified by the light of true knowledge, through incessant contemplation, perceives him the most pure God. Such is the invisible Supreme Being; he should be observed in the heart, wherein breath, consisting of five species, rests. The mind being perfectly freed from impurity; God who spreads over the mind and all the senses, imparts a knowledge of himself to the heart.

A pious votary of God obtains whatever division of the world, and whatever desirable object he may wish *to* acquire *for himself or for another:* therefore any one, who is desirous of honour and advantage, should revere him.

End of the First Section of the 3rd Moondukum.

THOSE wise men who, abandoning all desires, revere the devotee who has acquired a knowledge of the supreme exaltation of God, on whom the whole universe rests, and who is perfect and illuminates everywhere, will never be subjected to further birth.

He who, contemplating the various effects of objects visible or invisible, feels a desire to obtain them, shall be born again with those feelings : but the man satisfied with a knowledge of, and faith in, God, blessed by a total destruction of ignorance, forsakes all such desires even during his life.

A knowledge of God, *the prime object,* is not acquirable from study of the Veds, nor through retentive memory, nor yet by continual hearing of spiritual instruction : but he who seeks to obtain a *knowledge* of God is gifted with it, God rendering himself conspicuous to him.

No man *deficient in* faith or discretion can obtain a knowledge of God ; nor can even he who possesses wisdom mingled with the desire of fruition, gain it: but the soul of a wise man who, through firm belief, prudence, and pure understanding, not biassed by worldly desire, seeks for knowledge, will be absorbed into God.

The saints who, wise and firm, were satisfied solely with a knowledge of God, assured of the soul's divine origin, exempt from passion, and possessed of tranquillity of mind, having found God the omnipresent everywhere, have after death been absorbed into him ; *even as limited extension within a jar is by its destruction united to universal space.* All the votaries who repose on God alone their firm belief, originating from a knowledge of the Vedant, and who, by forsaking religious rites, obtain purification of mind, being continually occupied in divine reflections during life, are at the time of death entirely freed from ignorance and absorbed into God. On the approach of death, the elementary parts of their body, being fifteen in number, unite with their respective origins : their corporeal faculties, *such as vision and*

feeling, etc., return into their original sources, *the sun and air, etc.* The consequences of their works, together with their souls, are absorbed into the Supreme and Eternal Spirit, *in the same manner as the reflection of the sun in water returns to him on the removal of the water.* As all rivers flowing into the ocean disappear and lose their respective appellations and forms, so the person who has acquired a knowledge of, and faith in, God, freeing himself from the subjugation of figure and appellation, is absorbed into the Supreme Immaterial and Omnipresent Existence.

He who acquires a knowledge of the Supreme Being *according to the foregoing doctrine,* shall inevitably be absorbed into Him, *surmounting all the obstacles that he may have to encounter.* None of his progeny will be destitute of a true knowledge of God. He escapes from mental distress and from evil propensities ; he is also relieved from the ignorance which occasions the idea of duality. This is the true doctrine inculcated throughout the foregoing texts, and which a man should impart to those who are accustomed to perform good works, conversant in the Veds, and inclined toward the acquisition of the knowledge of God, and who themselves, with due regard, offer oblations to sacred fire ; and also to those who have continually practised Shirobrutu, *a certain observance of the sacred fire.* This is the true divine doctrine, in which Ungirus instructed his *pupil Shounuku,* which a person not accustomed to devotion should not study.

Salutation to the knowers of God !

TRANSLATION

OF THE

CENA UPANISHAD,

ONE OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE

SAMA VEDA;

ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF THE CELEBRATED

SHANCARACHARYA:

ESTABLISHING THE

UNITY AND THE SOLE OMNIPOTENCE

OF

THE SUPREME BEING

AND THAT

HE ALONE '

IS THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP.

CALCUTTA:

1823.

INTRODUCTION.

SINCE my publication of the abridgment of the *Vedanta* containing an exposition of all the *Veds* as given by the great VyaS, I have, for the purpose of illustrating and confirming the view that he has taken of them, translated into Bengalee the principal chapters of the V£ds, as being of unquestionable authority amongst all Hindoos. This work will, I trust, by explaining *to* my countrymen the real spirit of the Hindoo Scriptures, which is but the declaration of the unity of God, tend in a great degree to correct the erroneous conceptions, which have prevailed with regard to the doctrines they inculcate. It will also, I hope, tend- to discriminate those parts of the Véds which are to be interpreted in an allegorical sense, and consequently to correct those exceptionable practices, which not only deprive Hindoos in general of the common comforts* of society, but also lead them frequently to self-destruction,t—or *to* the sacrifice:]: of the lives of their friends and relations.

It is with no ordinary feeling of satisfaction that I have already seen many respectable persons of my countrymen, to the great disappointment of their interested spiritual

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* A Hindoo of caste can only eat once between sunrise and sunset cannot eat dressed victuals in a boat or ship—nor clothed—nor in a tavern—nor any food that has been touched by a person of a different caste—nor if interrupted while eating, can he resume his meal.

† As at Prayaga, Gunga Sagar, and under the wheels of the car of Jagannath.

% As, for instance, persons whose recovery from sickness is supposed to be doubtful, are carried to die on the banks of the Ganges. This is practised by the Hindoos of Bengal only, the cruelty of which affects even Hindoos of Behâr, Hahabad, and all the Upper Provinces.

guides, rise superior to their original prejudices, and enquire into the truths of religion. As many European gentlemen, especially those who interest themselves in the improvement of their fellow-creatures, may be gratified with a view of the doctrines of the original work, it appeared to me that I might best contribute to that gratification, by translating a few chapters of the Véd into the English language, which I have accordingly done, and now submit them to their candid judgment. Such benevolent people will, perhaps, rise from a perusal of them with the conviction, that in the most ancient times the inhabitants of this part of the globe (at least the more intelligent class) were not unacquainted with metaphysical subjects ; that allegorical language or description was very frequently employed to represent the attributes of the Creator, which were sometimes designated as independent existences ; and that, however suitable this method might be to the refined understandings of men of learning, it had the most mischievous effect when literature and philosophy decayed, producing all those absurdities and idolatrous notions which have checked, or rather destroyed, every mark of reason, and darkened every beam of understanding.

The Véd from which all Hindoo literature is derived, is, in the opinion of the Hindoos, an inspired work, co-eval with the existence of the world. It is divided into four parts, *viz.*, Rig, Yajur, Sam, and At'harva; these are again divided into several branches, and these last are sub-divided into chapters. It is the general characteristic of each Ved, that the primary chapters of each branch treat of astronomy, medicine, arms, and other arts and sciences. They also exhibit allegorical representations of the attributes* of the Supreme Being, by means of earthly objects, animate or inanimate,

*** It is my intention to give, with the blessing of God, in my next publication, an account of the relation betwixt those attributes and the allegorical representations used to denote them.**

whose shapes or properties are analogous to the nature of those attributes, and pointing out the modes of their worship, immediately, or through the medium of fire. In the subsequent chapters, the unity of the Supreme Being as the Sole Ruler of the universe, is plainly inculcated, and the mode of worshipping him particularly directed. The doctrine of a plurality of gods and goddesses laid down in the preceding chapters is not only controverted, but reasons assigned for its introduction ; for instance, that the worship of the Sun and Fire, together with the whole allegorical system, were only inculcated for the sake of those whose limited understandings rendered them incapable of comprehending and adoring the invisible Supreme Being; so that such persons might not remain in a brutified state, destitute of all religious principles. Should this explanation given by the Véd itself, as well as by its celebrated commentator Vyas, not be allowed to reconcile those passages which are seemingly at variance with each other, as those that declare the unity of the invisible Supreme Being, with others which describe a plurality of independent visible Gods, the whole work must, I am afraid, not only be stripped of its authority, but be looked upon as altogether unintelligible.

I have often lamented that, in our general researches into theological truth, we are subjected to the conflict of many obstacles. When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other; and when, discouraged by this circumstance, we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is, alone, to conduct us to the object of our pursuit. We often find that, instead of facilitating our endeavours or clearing up our perplexities, it only serves to generate an universal doubt, incompatible with principles on which our comfort and happiness mainly depend. The best method perhaps, is, neither to give ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other; but by a proper use of the lights

furnished by both, endeavour *to* improve our intellectual and moral faculties, relying on the goodness of the Almighty Power, which alone enables us to attain that which we *earnestly* and diligently seek for.

THE

CENA UPANISHAD.

OF

THE SAMA VEDA.

Ist. WHO is he *[asks a pupil of his spiritual father,]* tinder whose sole will the intellectual power makes its approach *to different objects ?* Who is he under whose authority *breath,*the primitive *power in the body, m*akes its operation ? Who is he by whose direction language is *regularly* pronounced ? And who is that immaterial being that applies vision and hearing *to their respective objects* ?

2nd. He, *[answers the spiritual parent,*] who is the sense of the sense of hearing ; the intellect of the intellect; the essential cause of language ; the breath of breath ; the sense' of the sense of vision;—this is the Being *concerning whom you would* enquire. Learned men, having relinquished *the notion of self independence and self consideration, from knowing the Supreme Understanding to be the sole source of sense,* enjoy everlasting beatitude after their departure from this world.

3rd. Hence no vision can approach him, no language can describe him, no intellectual power can compass or determine him. We know nothing of how the Supreme Being should be explained: he is beyond all that is within the reach of comprehension, and also beyond nature, which is above conception. Our ancient *spiritual parents* have thus explained him to us.

4th. He alone, who has never been described by language, and who directs language *to its meaning,* is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men Worship: know THOU this.

5th. He alone, whom understanding cannot comprehend, and who, as said *by learned men,* knows the real nature of understanding, is the Supreme Being, [and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

6th. He alone, whom no one can conceive by vision, and by whose superintendence every one perceives the objects of vision, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

7th. He. alone, whom no one can hear through the sense of hearing, and who knows the real nature of the sense of hearing, is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

8th. He alone, whom no one can perceive through the sense of smelling, and who applies the sense of smelling *to its objects,* is the Supreme Being, and not any specified thing which men worship : know THOU this.

9th. If you *[continues the spiritual parent], from what I have stated,* suppose *and say* that " I know the Supreme Being thoroughly;" you in truth know very little of the Omnipresent Being; and any conception of that Being, which you limit to your powers of sense, is not only deficient, but also his description which you extend to *the* bodies of the celestial gods, is also imperfect;* you consequently should enquire into the true knowledge of the Supreme Being. *To this the pupil replies: "* I perceive that *at this moment* I begin to know God."

10th. " Not that I suppose, " *continues* he, "that I know God thoroughly, nor do I suppose that I do not know him at all; as, among us, he who knows the meaning of the above-stated assertion, is possessed of the knowledge respecting

* The sum of the notion concerning the Supreme Being given in the Védánt, is, that he is "the Soul of the universe ;" and bears the same relation to all material extension that a human soul does to the individual body with which it is connected.

God; *viz,,* "that I neither know him thoroughly, nor am entirely ignorant of him."

11th. [*The Spiritual Father again resumes:]* He who believes that he cannot comprehend God, *does* know him ; and he Who believes that he can comprehend God, *does not* know him : as men of perfect understanding acknowledge him to be beyond comprehension; and men of imperfect understanding suppose him to be within the reach of their simplest perception.

12th, The notion of the sensibility of bodily Organs, *Which are composed of insensible particles,* leads to the notion of God; which notion alone is accurate, and tends to everlasting happiness. Man gains, by self-exertion, the power of acquiring knowledge respecting God, and through the same acquisition he acquires eternal beatitude.

13th. Whatever person has, *according to the above stated doctrine,* known God, is really happy, and whoever has hot known him is subjected to great misery. Learned men, having reflected On the Spirit of God extending over all moveable as well as immoveable Creatures, after their departure front this world are absorbed into the Supreme Being;

In a battle between the Celestial gods and the demons,* God obtained victory over the latter, in favour of the former *(or properly speaking, God enabled the former to defeat the latter)* ; but, upon this victory being gained, the celestial gods acquired their respective dignities, and supposed that this victory and glory were entirely owing to themselves* The Omnipresent Being, having known their boast, appeared to them *with an appearance beyond description.*

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* In the Ukhaika it is said that those powers of the Divinity, which produce agreeable effects and conduce to moral order and happiness, are represented under the figure of celestial Gods, and those attributes from which pain and misery flow, are called Demons and step-brothers of the former, with whom they are in a state of perpetual hostility.

They could not know what adorable appearance it was : they, *consequently,* said to fire : *or properly speaking, the* god of fire: "Discover thou, O god of fire, what adorable appearance this is," His reply was, " I shall." He proceeded fast to that adorable appearance, which asked him, "Who art thou ?" He then answered, " I am fire, and I am the origin of the Ved;" *that is, I am a well-known personage.* The Supreme Omnipotence, upon being thus replied to, asked him *again,* "What power is in so celebrated a person as thou art ? He replied, " I can burn to ashes all that exists in the " world." The Supreme Being then having laid a straw before him, said to him, " Canst thou burn this straw ?" The god of fire approached the straw, that could not burn it; though he exerted all his power. He then *unsuccessfully* retired and *told the others,* " I have been unable to discover what adorable appearance this is." Now they all said to wind *(or properly to the god of wind),* " Discover thou, O god of wind, what adorable appearance this is." His reply was, " I shall." He proceeded fast to that adorable appearance, which asked him, "Who art thou?" He then answered, " I am wind, and I pervade unlimited space ; " *that is, I am a well-known personage.* The Supreme Being, *upon being* thus replied to, asked him *again,* " What power is in so celebrated a person as thou art?" He replied, " I can uphold all that exists in the world." The Supreme Being then having laid a straw before him, said to him, " Canst thou uphold this straw ? " The god of wind approached the straw, but could not hold it up, though he exerted all his power. He then *unsuccessfully* retired *and told the others,* "I have been unable to discover what adorable appearance this, is." Now they all said to the god of atmosphere, "Discover thou, O revered god of atmosphere, what adorable appearance this is." His reply was, " I shall." He proceeded fast to that adorable appearance, which vanished from his view. He met at the same spot a woman, *the goddess of*

instruction, arrayed in golden robes in the shape of the most beautiful Uma.* He asked, " What was that adorable appearance?" She replied, " It was the Supreme Being owing to whose victory you are all advanced to exaltation." The god of atmosphere, from her instruction, knew that it was the Supreme Being *that had appeared to them. He at first communicated that information to the gods of fire and of wind.* As the gods of fire, wind, and atmosphere had approached to the adorable appearance, and had perceived it, and also as they had known, prior *to the others,* that it was indeed God *that appeared to them,* they seemed to be superior to the other gods. As the god of atmosphere had approached to the adorable appearance, and perceived it, and also as he knew, prior to *every one of them,* that it was God *that appeared to them,* he seemed not only superior to every other god, but al*so, for that reason,* exalted the above gods of fire and wind-

The foregoing is a divine figurative representation of the Supreme Being; meaning that in one instant he shines at once *over all the universe* like the illumination of lightning; and in another, that he disappears as quick as the twinkling of an eye. Again, it is represented *of the Supreme Being,* that *pure* mind conceives that it approaches to him as nearly as possible: Through the same pure mind the pious man thinks of him, and consequently application of the mind to him is repeatedly used. That God, *who alone in reality has no resemblance, and to whom the mind* cannot approach, is adorable by all living creatures; he is therefore called *"adorable;"* he should, *according to the prescribed manner,* be worshipped. All creatures revere the person who knows God in the manner thus described. The pupil *now says,* "Tell me, 0 Spiritual Father, the Upanishad, or the principal part of the Ved."

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* The wife of Siva.

The *Spiritual Father makes this answer*, "*I* have told you the principal part of the Ved, which relates to God alone, and, indeed told you the Upanishad, of which, austere devotion, control over the senses, performance of religious rites; and the remaining parts of the Ved, as well as those sciences that are derived from the Véds, are *only* the feet; and whose altar and support is truth." He, who understands it as thus described, having relieved himself from sin, acquires eternal and unchangeable beatitude.

TRANSLATION

OF THE

KUTH-OPUNISHUD

OF THE

UJOOR-VED,

ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF THE CELEBRATED

SHUNKURACHARYU,

CALCUTTA;

1819.

PREFACE.

IN pursuance of my attempt to render a translation of the complete Vedant, or the principal parts of the Veds, into the current languages of this country, I had some time ago the satisfaction of publishing a translation of the Kut'h-opunishud of the Ujoor-ved into Bengalee ; and of distributing copies of it as widely as my circumstances would allow, for the purpose of diffusing Hindoo scriptural knowledge among the adherents of that religion- The present publication is intended to assist the European community in forming their opinion respecting Hindoo Theology, rather from the matter found in their doctrinal scriptures, than from the Poorans, moral tales, or any other modern works, or from the superstitious rites and habits daily encouraged and fostered by their self-interested leaders.

This work not only treats polytheism with contempt and disdain, but inculcates invariably the unity of God as the intellectual principle, the sole origin of individual intellect, entirely distinct from matter and its affections ; and teaches also the mode of directing the mind to him.

A great body of my countrymen, possessed of good understandings, and not much fettered with prejudices, being perfectly satisfied with the truth of the doctrines contained in this and in other works, already laid by me before them, and of the gross errors of the puerile system of idol worship which they were led to follow, have altered their religious conduct in a manner becoming«the dignity of human beings; while the advocates of idolatry and their misguided followers, over whose opinions prejudice and obstinacy prevail more than good sense and judgment, prefer custom and fashion to the authorities of their scriptures, and therefore continue,

under the form of religious devotion, to practise a system which destroys, to the utmost degree, the natural texture of Society, and prescribes crimes of the most heinous nature which even the most savage nations would blush to commit, unless compelled by the most urgent necessity.* I am, however, not without a sanguine hope that, through Divine Providence and human exertions, they will sooner or later avail themselves of that true system of religion which leads its observers to a knowledge and love of God, and to a friendly inclination towards their fellow-creatures, impressing their hearts at the same time with humility and charity, accompanied by independence of mind and pure sincerity. Contrary to the code of idolatry, this system defines sins as evil thoughts proceeding from the heart, quite unconnected with observances as to diet and other matters of form. At any rate, it seems to me that I cannot better employ my time than in an endeavour to illustrate and maintain truth, and to render service to my fellow-labourers, confiding in the mercy of that Being *to* whom the motives of our actions and secrets of our hearts are well-known.

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* *Vide* the latter end of the Introduction to the Moonduk Opunishud.

KUT'H-OPUNISHUD,

BULLEE I.

DESIROUS *of future fruition,* Bajushrubusu *performed the sacrifice Vishwujit, at which* he distributed all his property. He had a son named Nuchiketa. *Old and infirm cows* being brought by the father as fees to be given to attending priests, the youth was seized with compassion, reflecting within himself, " He who gives *to attending priests* such cows as are no longer able to drink water or to eat grass, and are incapable of giving further milk or of producing young, is carried to that mansion where there is no felicity whatever."

He then said to his father, " To whom, O father, wilt thou consign me over *in lieu of these cows ?"* and repeated the same question a second and a third time.

Enraged with his presumption, the father replied to him, " I shall give thee to Yumu" *(the god of death). The youth then said to himself, "In the discharge of my duties as a son,* I hold a foremost place among many sons or pupils of the first class, and I am not inferior to any of the sons or pupils of the second class : whether my father had a previous engagement with Yumu, which he will now perform by surrendering me *to him, or made use of such an expression through anger, I know not." The youth finding his father afflicted with sorrow, said, "* Remember the meritorious conduct of our ancient *forefathers,* and observe the virtuous acts of cotemporary good men. *Life is too short to gain advantages by means of falsehood or breach of promise ;* as man like a plant is easily destroyed, and again like it puts forth its form. *Do you therefore surrender me to Yumu according to your promise." The youth Nuchiketa, by permission of his father, went to the habitation of Yumu.*

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After he had remained there for three days without food or refreshment, Yumu returned to his dwelling, and was thus addressed by his family: " A Brahmun entering a house as a guest is like fire ; *good householders, therefore,* extinguish his anger *by offering him water, a seat, and food.* Do thou, O Yumu! present him with water. A man deficient in wisdom suffers his hopes, his sanguine expectations of success, his improvement from associating with good men, the benefit which he might derive from his affable conversation, and the fruits produced by performance of prescribed sacrifices, and also by digging of wells and other pious liberal actions, as well as all his sons and cattle, to be destroyed, should a Brahmun happen to remain in his house without food."

Yumu being thus admonished by his family, approached Nuchiketa and said to him; " As thou, O Brahmun! hast lived in my house, a revered guest, for the space of three *days and* nights without food, I offer thee reverence in atonement, so that bliss may attend me ; and do thou ask three favours *of me* as a recompense for what thou hast suffered while dwelling in my house during these three days past." *Nuchiketa then made this as his first request, saying,* " Let, O Yumu ! my father Gotum's apprehension *of my death* be removed, his tranquillity of mind be restored, his anger against me extinguished, and let him recognise me *on my return,* after having been set free by thee. This is the first of three favours which I ask of thee." *Yumu then replied:*

" *Thy father,* styled Ouddaluki and Arooni, shall have the same regard for you as before; so that, being assured of thy existence, he shall, through my power, repose the remaining nights *of his life* free from sorrow, after having seen thee released from the grasp of death." Nuchiketa then made his second request. " In heaven, where there is no fear whatsoever, and where even thou, 0 Yumu! canst not *always exercise thy authority,* and where, therefore, none dread *thy*

as weak mortals of the earth, the soul, un- thirst or hunger, and unmolested by sorrow, le. on. As thou, O Yumu! dost possess know- do t ; fire which is the means of attaining heaven, for, : me, who am full of faith, in that knowledge; sacred . enjoy heaven, owing to their observance of This I ask endowed with the nature of celestial deities. offered." thee, as the second favour which thou hast of fire, the *u replied:* "Being possessed of a knowledge gratification eans that lead to the enjoyment of heavenly observe. K I impart it to thee; which do thou attentively sions in hea ow thou fire, as means to obtain various man- in the bod en, as the support *of the world*, and as residing

Yumu prior to al plained to Nuchiketa the nature of fire, as being and their creatures, and also the particulars of the bricks fire, as number, which are requisite in forming the sacred peated to ell as the mode of preserving it. The youth re- him; at Yumu these instructions exactly as imparted to which Yumu being pleased, again spoke.

The liberal-minded Yumu, satisfied with Nuchiketa, thus say th: "I shall bestow on thee another favour, *which is,* that is sacred fire shall be styled after thy name; and accept thou this valuable and various-coloured necklace. Receiving instructions from parents and spiritual fathers, a person who has thrice collected fire, *as prescribed in the Véd,* and also has been in habits of performing sacrifices, studying the Véds, and giving alms, is not liable to repeated birth and death: B having known and contemplated fire as originating from an hmá, possessing superior understanding, full of splendour, wo worthy of praise, enjoys the highest fruition. A wise thir oper of sacred fire, who, understanding the three all prescribed, has offered oblation to fire, surmounting enjo ons during life, and extricated from sorrow, will atifications in heaven.

"This, O Nuchiketa! is that knowledg the means of obtaining heaven, which thou me as the second favour; men shall call it Make, O Nuchiketa! thy third request."

Nuchiketa then said: "Some are of op fter man's demise existence continues, and other ases. Hence a doubt has arisen *respecting the nature* . . *soul;* I therefore wish to be instructed by thee in this ma tter. This is the last of the favours thou hast offered." *Yum u replied:* "Even gods have doubted and disputed on tl his subject; which being obscure, never can be thoroughly com prehended: Ask, O Nuchiketa! another favour *instead of this.* Do not thou take advantage of my promise, but give up this request." *Nuchiketa replied:* "*I am* positively informed that Gods entertained doubts on this subject; and even thou, O Yumu! callest it difficult of comprehension. But no ins tructor on this point equal to thee can be found, and no other object is so desirable as this." Yumu said: "Do thou rather request of me to give thee sons and grandsons, each to attai the age of an hundred years; numbers of cattle, elephants, g old, and horses; also extensive empire on earth, where th u shalt live as many years as thou wishest.

"If thou knowest another object equally desirable w these, ask it; together with wealth and long life. Thou mayest reign, O Nuchiketa! over a great kingdom: I will enable thee to enjoy all wished-for objects.

"Ask according to thy desire all objects that are difficult of acquisition in the mortal world. Ask these beautiful women, with elegant equipages and musical instruments, no man can acquire any thing like them *without our g t.* Enjoy thou the attendance of these women, whom I may tow on thee; but do not put to me, O Nuchiketa! the s- tion respecting existence after death." es-

Nuchiketa then replied. "The acquisition of t' ments thou hast offered, O Yumu! is *in the p* joy- *lace*

doubtful; and should they be obtained, they destroy the strength of all the senses; and even the life of Bruhmd is, indeed, comparatively short. Therefore let thy equipages, and thy dancing and music, remain with thee.

"No man can be satisfied with riches; and as we have *fortunately* beheld thee, we may acquire wealth, should we feel desirous of it, and we also may live as long as thou exercisest the authority of the god of death; but the only object I desire is what I haye already begged *of thee.*

"*A* rnortal being, whose habitation is the low mansion of earth, and who is liable to sudden reduction, approaching the gods exempted from death and debility, and understanding from them *that there is a knowledge of futurity, should not ask of them any inferior favour*—and knowing the fleeting nature of music, sexual gratification, and sensual pleasures, who can take delight in a long life on earth? Do thou instruct us in that knowledge which removes doubts respecting existence after death, and is of great importance with a view to futurity, and which is obscure and acquirable with difficulty. I, Nuchiketa, cannot ask any other favour but this."

End of the first Bullee,

BULLEE II.

Yumu now, after a sufficient trial of Nuchiketa's resolution) answers the third question, saying, " Knowledge of God which leads to absorption, is one thing; and rites, which have fruition for their object, another: each of these producing different consequences, holds out to man inducements to follow it. The man, who of these two chooses knowledge, is blessed; and he who, *for the sake of reward,* practises rites, is excluded from the enjoyment of eternal beatitude. Knowledge and rites both offer themselves to men ; but he who is possessed of wisdom, taking their respective natures into serious consideration, distinguishes one from the other, and chooses faith, despising fruition; and a fool, for the sake of advantage and enjoyment, accepts the offer of rites.

" Thou, O Nuchiketa! knowing the perishable nature of the desirable and gratifying objects offered by me, hast rejected them, and refused the adoption of that contemptible practice, which leads to fruition and to riches, and to which men in general are attached. Wise men *are sensible* that a knowledge of God, *which procures absorption,* and the performance of rites *that produces fruition,* are entirely opposite to each other, and yield different consequences. I conceive thee, Nuchiketa, to be desirous of a knowledge of God; for the numerous estimable objects offered by me cannot tempt thee. Surrounded by the darkness of ignorance, fools consider themselves wise and learned, and wander about in various directions, like blind men when guided by a blind man."

To an indiscreet man who lives carelessly, and is immersed in the desire of wealth, the means of gaining heavenly beatitude are not manifest. He thinks that this visible world alone exists, and that there is nothing hereafter; consequently he is repeatedly subjected to my control. The soul is that of whose real nature many persons have never heard; and several though they have heard, have not comprehended. A man who is capable of giving instruction on this subject is

rare: and One who listens to it attentively, must be intelligent: and that one who, being taught by a wise teacher, understands it, is uncommon.

If a man of inferior abilities describe the nature of the soul, no one will thoroughly understand it; for various opinions are held *by contending parties.* When the subject is explained by a person who believes the soul to emanate from God, doubt, in regard to its eternity, ceases; but otherwise it is inexplicable and not capable of demonstration.

The knowledge respecting the soul which thou wilt gain by me, cannot be acquired by means of reason alone; but it should be obtained from him who is versed in the sacred authorities. Oh, beloved pupil, Nuchiketa! may we have enquirers like thee, who art full of resolution. I know that fruition, acquirable by means of rites, is perishable; for nothing eternal can be obtained through perishable means. *Notwithstanding my conviction of the destructible nature of fruition,* I performed the worship of the sacred fire, whereby I became possessed of this soverignty of long duration.

Thou, Oh wise Nuchiketa! hast through firmness refused, though offered to thee, the state of Bruhma; which satisfies every desire, and which is the support of the world—the best consequence of the performance of rites without limit or fear—praiseworthy—full of superhuman power—extensive and stable.

The soul is that which is difficult to be comprehended—most obscure—veiled by the ideas acquired through the senses, and which resides in faculties—does not depart even in great danger, and exists unchangeable. A wise man knowing the resplendent soul, through a mind abstracted from worldly objects, and constantly applied to it, neither rejoices nor does he grieve,

A mortal who, having heard the pure doctrines relative to the soul and retained them in his memory, knowing the invisible soul to be distinct from *the body,* feels rejoiced at his

acquisition, I think the abode of the knowledge of God is open to thee,

Nuckiketd then asked, " If thou knowest any Beings" who *exists* distinctly front rites, their consequences and their observers, and also from evil, and who is different front effects and their respective causes, and is above past, future, and present time, do thou inform me."

Yumu replies; " I will explain *to* thee briefly that Being whom all the Veds treat of, *either directly or indirectty,* to whom all austerities are directed, and who is the main object of those who perform the duties of an ascetic. He, to wit, whom the Word OM implies, is the Supreme Being."

That OM is the title of Bruhma arid also of the Supreme Being, through means of which man may gain what he wishes ; *(that is, if he Worship Bruhma by means of Om, he shall be received into his mansion ; or if through it he elevate his mind to God, he shall obtain absorption.)*

OM is the best of all means *calculated* to direct the mind towards God ; and it is instrumental either in the acquisition of the knowledge of God *or of the dignity of Bruhma :* man therefore having recourse to this word, shall either be absorbed in God, or revered like Brahma*.

The soul is not liable to birth nor to death : it is mere understanding : neither does it take its origin from any other or from itself: hence it is unborn, eternal, without reduction, and unchangeable ; therefore the soul is not injured by the hurt which the body may receive. If any one ready to kill another imagine that he can destroy his soul, and the other think that his soul shall suffer destruction, they both know nothing; for neither does it kill nor is it killed by *another.*

The soul is the smallest of the small, and greatest of the great. It resides in the hearts of all living creatures. A mah who knows it and its pure state, through the steadiness of the external and internal senses, acquired from the abandoning of worldly desires, overcomes sorrow and perplexity.

The soul, although without motion, seems to go to furthest Space ; and though it resides in the body at rest, yet seems to move everywhere. Who can perceive besides myself, that splendid soul, the support of the sensations of happiness and plain ?

The soul, although it is immaterial; yet resides closely attached to perishable material objects : knowing it as great and extensive, a wise man never grieves for it. A knowledge of the soul is not acquirable from the study of the Veds, nor through retentive memory, nor yet by constant hearing of spiritual instruction : but he who seeks to obtain a knowledge of it, is gifted with it, the soul rendering itself conspicuous to him.

No man can acquire a knowledge of the soul without abstaining from evil acts; without having control over the senses and the mind ; nor can he gain it with a mind, though firm, yet filled with the desire of fruition ; but man may obtain a knowledge of the soul through his knowledge of God.

No *ignorant* man can, in a perfect manner, know the state of the existence of that God whose food is *all things,* even the Brahmun and the Kshutri; *(that is, who destroys every object bearing figure and appellation)* ; and who consumes death itself even as butter.

End of the Second Bulee.

BULLEE III.

GOD and the soul entering into the heart, the excellent divine abode, consume, while residing in the body, the necessary consequences of its actions; *that is, the latter is rewarded or punished according to its good or evil actions, and the former witnesses all those events.* Those who have a knowledge of God, consider the former as light and the latter as shade: the observers of external rites also, as well as those who have collected fire three times for worship, believe the same.

We can *know and collect fire,* which is a bridge to the observers of rites; and can know the eternal and fearless God, who is the conveyer of those who wish to cross the ocean of ignorance. Consider the soul as a rider, the body as a car, the intellect its driver, the mind as its rein, the external senses are called the horses, restrained by the mind; external objects are the roads : so wise men believe the soul united with the body, the senses and the mind, to be the partaker *of the consequences of good or evil acts.*

If that intellect, *which is represented as the driver,* be indiscreet, and the rein of the mind loose, all the senses *under the authority of the intellectual power* become unmanageable ; like wicked horses under the control of an *unfit* driver.

If the intellect be discreet and the rein of the mind firm, all the senses prove steady and manageable ; like good horses nnder an excellent driver.

He, who has not a prudent intellect and steady mind, and who consequently lives always impure, cannot arrive at the divine glory, but descends to the world.

He who has a prudent intellect and steady mind, and consequently lives always pure, attains that glory from whence he never will descend.

Man who has intellect as his prudent driver, and a steady mind as his rein, passing over the paths of mortality, arrives at the high glory of the omnipresent God.

The origin of the senses is more refined than the senses; the essence of the mind is yet more refined than that origin : the source of intellect is again more exalted than that of the mind ; the prime sensitive particle is superior to the source of intellect ; nature, the apparent cause of the universe, is again superior to that particle, to which the omnipresent God is still superior; nothing is more exalted than God: he is therefore superior to all existences, and is the Supreme object of all. God exists obscurely throughout the universe, *consequently* is not perceived ; but he is known through the acute intellect constantly directed towards him by wise men of penetrating understandings. A wise man shall transfer the power of speech and that of the senses to the mind, and the mind to the intellect, and the intellect to the *purified* soul, and the soul to the unchangeable Supreme Being.

Rise up and awake *from the sleep of ignorance* ; and having approached able teachers, acquire knowledge *of God, the origin of the soul :* for the way to the knowledge of God is considered by wise men difficult as the passage over the sharp edge of a razor. The Supreme Being is not organised with the faculties of hearing, feeling, vision, taste or smell. He is unchangeable and eternal ; without beginning or end ; and is beyond that particle which is the origin of the intellect : *man* knowing him thus, is relieved from the grasp of death.

A wise man reading to *Brahniuns,* or hearing *from a teacher,* this ancient doctrine imparted to Nuchiketa by Yumu, is absorbed into God.

He who reads this most secret doctrine before an assemblage of Brahmuns, or at the time of offering oblations to his forefathers, enjoys innumerable good consequences.

End of the Third Bullee.

BULLEE IV.

GOD has created the senses to be directed towards external objects ; they consequently are apt to perceive outward things only, and not the eternal spirit, But a wise man being desirous of eternal life, withdrawing his senses from their natural course, apprehends the omnipresent Supreme Being,

The ignorant seek external and desirable objects only ; *consequently* they are subjected to the chain of all-seizing death. Hence the wise, knowing that God alone is immortal and eternal in this perishable world, do not cherish a wish *for those objects.*

TO Him, owing to whose presence alone the animate beings, *composed of insensible particles,* perceive objects through vision, the pewer of taste, of feeling, and of hearing, and also the pleasure derivable from sexual intercourse* nothing can be unknown : he is that existence which *thou desiredst to know.*

A wise man after having known that the soul, owing to whose presence living creatures perceive objects, wherher they dream or wake, is great and extensive, never grieves,

He who believes that the soul, which enjoys the fruits of good or evil actions, intimately connected with the body, originates from, and is united with, God, the Lord of past and future events, will not conceal its nature : he is that existence which thou desiredst to know. He who knows that the prime sen-, sitive particle, which proceeded from God prior to the creation of water and the other elements, having entered into the heart, exists united with material objects, knows the Supreme Being. He is that existence which thou desiredst to, know.

That sensitive particle which perceives objects, and includes all the celestial deities, and which was created with all the elements, exists, entering into the space of the heart, and there resides. It is that existence which thou, desiredst to know.

The sacred fire, the receiver of oblations, after the wood

has been kindled below and above, is preserved by its observers with the same care as pregnant women take of their foetus ; it is praised daily by prudent observers, and men habituated to (constant devotion. That atmosphere from whence the sun ascends, and in which he goes down, on which all the world, *including fire, speech, and other* things, rests, and independently of which nothing exists, is that existence which thou desiredst to know. Whatever individual intellect there is connected with the body, is that intellectual principle, which is pure and immaterial existence, and the intellectual overspreading principle is, the individual intellect; but he who thinks here that they are different in nature, is subject to repeated transmigrations.

Through the mind, *purified by spiritual instructions)* the knowledge that the soul is of divine origin, and by no means is different *from its source,* shall be acquired, whereby the idea of duality entirely ceases. He who thinks there is Variety of intellectual principle, undergoes transmigration.

The omnipresent spirit, extending over the space of the heart, which is the size of a finger, resides within the body ; and persons knowing him the Lord of past, and future events, will not again attempt to conceal his nature: He is that, existence which thou desiredst to know.

The omnipresent spirit which extends over the space of the heart, the size of a finger, is the most pure light. He is the Lord of past and future events ; He alone pervades *the universe* now and ever ; He is that existence which thou desiredst to know. In the same way as water falling on uneven ground disperses throughout the hollow places, and is lost, so a man who thinks that the souls of different bodies are distinct in nature from each other, shall be placed in various, forms by transmigration.

As water falling on even grounds remains unchanged, so the soul of a wise man of steady mind is *always* pure, freed from the idea of duality.

End of the Fourth Bullee.,

BULLEE V.

THE body is a dwelling with eleven gates, belonging to the unborn and unchangeable spirit, through whose constant contemplation man escapes from grief, and acquiring absorption, is exempted from transmigration. He is that existence which thou desiredst to know.

That spiritual Being acts *always* and moves in heaven ; preserves all material existence as depending on him ; moves in space; resides in fire ; walks on the earth ; enters like a guest into sacrificial vessels ; dwells in man, in gods, in sacrifices ; moves throughout the sky ; seems to be born in water, *as fishes,* &c.; produced on earth, *as vegetables,* on the tops of mountains, *as rivers,* and also as members of sacrifices : yet is he truly pure and great. He who causes breath to ascend above the heart and peditum to descend, resides in the heart : He is adorable ; and to him all the senses offer oblation of the objects which they perceive.

When the soul, which is connected with the body, leaves it, nothing then remains in the body which may preserve the system : It is that existence which thou desiredst to know.

Neither by the help of breath, nor from the presence of other powers, can a mortal exist : but they all exist owing to that other existence on which both breath and the senses rest.

I will now disclose to you the secret doctrine of the eternal God: and also how man, *void of that knowledge,* O Goutum ! transmigrates after death.

Some of those *who are ignorant of this docirine* enter after death the womb of females to appear in the animal shape, while others assume the form of trees, according to their conduct and knowledge *during their lives.*

The Being who continues to operate even at that time of sleep, when all the senses cease to act, and then creates desirable of objects of various desciprions, is pure and the **greatest of all**; **and he alone is called eternal, on** whom **all**

the world rests, and independently of whom nothing can exist: He is that existence which thou desiredst to know. As fire, although one in essence, on becoming visible in the world, appears in various forms and shapes, according to its different locations, so God, the soul of the universe, though one, appears is various modes, according as he connects himself with different material objects, and, *like space,* extends over all.

As air, although one in essence, in becoming operative in the body appears in various natures, as breath and other vital airs, so God, the soul of the universe, though one, appears in different modes, according as he connects himself with various material objects, and, *like space,* extends over all.

As the sun, though he serves as the eye of all living creatures, yet is not polluted externally *or interally* by being connected with visible vile objects, so God, the soul of the universe, although one and omnipresent, is not affected by the sensations of individual pain, for he is beyond its action.

God is but one ; and he has the whole world under his control, for he is the operating soul in all objects: He, *through his omniscience,* makes his sole existence appear in the form of the universe. To those wise men who acquire a knowledge of him who is operative on the human faculties, is eternal beatitude allotted, and not to those who are void of that knowledge.

God is eternal amidst the perishable universe ; and is the source of sensation among all animate existences: and he alone assigns to so many objects their respective purposes : To those wise men who know him the ruler of the intellectual power, everlasting beatitude is allotted ; but not to those who are void of that knowledge.

How can I acquire that most gratifying divine knowledge, which, though beyond comprehension, *wise men, by constant applicatioa of mind, alone obtain,* as if it were present?

Does it shine conspicuously ?—and does it appear to the hurrian faculties ?

Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor yet the stars can throw light on God : Even the illuminating; lightning cannot throw light upon him ; much less Can limited fire give him light: But they all imitate him, and all borrow their light from him—*that is, nothing can influence God and render him perspicuous : But God himself imparts his knowledge to the heart freed from passion and desire.*

End of the Fifth Bullee.

BULLEE VI.

THE world is a fig-tree of long duration, whose origin is above, and the branches of which, *as different species*^ are below. The origin alone is pure and supreme ; and he alone is eternal on whom all the world rests, and independently of whom nothing can exist. He is that existence which thou desiredst to know.

God being eternal existence, the universe, whatsoever it is, exists and proceeds from him. He is the great dread of all *heavenly bodies,* as if he were prepared to strike them with thunderbolts ; *so that nene of them can deviate front their respective courses established by him.* Those who know him as the eternal power acquire absorption.

Through his fear fire supplies *us* with heat; and the sun, through his fear, shines *regularly;* and also Indru, and air, and fifthly, death, are, through his fear, constantly in motion.

If *man* can acquire a knowledge of God in this world, before the fall of his body, *he becomes happy for ever:* Otherwise he assumes new forms in different mansions. *A knowledge of God shines* on the purified intellect in this world, as clearly as an object is seen by reflection in a polished mirror: In the region of the deified Progenitors of mankind *it is viewed* as obscurely as objects perceived in the state of dreaming; and in the mansion of Gundhurvus, in the same degree as the reflection of an object on water; **but** in the mansion of Bruhma it appears as distinctly as the difference between light and darkness.

A wise man, knowing the soul to be distinct from the senses, which proceed from different origins, and also from **the** state of waking and of sleep, never again grieves.

The mind is more refined than the external senses ; and **the** intellect is again more exalted than the mind. The prime sensitive particle is superior to the intellect;—nature, the **apparent cause of the universe, is again superior to that**

particle unaffected by matter: *Superior to nature is God,* who is omnipresent and without material effects : by acquisition of whose knowledge man becomes extricated from ignorance and distress, is absorbed into Him *after death.* His substance does not come within the reach of vision ; no one can apprehend him through the senses: By constant direction of the intellect, free from doubts, he perspicuously appears ; and those who know him in the prescribed manner, enjoy eternal life.

That part of life wherein the p6wer of the five external senses and the mind are directed towards the Supreme Spirit/ and the intellectual power ceases its action, is said to be most sacred ; and this steady control of the senses and mind is considered to be *Yog (or withdrawing the senses and the mind from worldly objects) :* Man should be vigilant in the acquisition of that state ; for such control proceeds from, constant exercise, and ceases by neglect.

Neither through speech, nor through intellectual power, nor yet through vision, can man acquire a knowledge of God;; but, save him who believes in the existence of God *as the cause of the universe,* no one can have a notion of that Being. A man should acquire, first, a belief in the existence of God, the origin of the universe ; and next, a real knowledge of him ; to wit, that he is incomprehensible; for the means which lead men to acquire a knowledge of his existence, graciously conduct them to the belief of his incomprehensibility. When all the desires settled in the heart leave man, the mortal then become immortal, and acquire absorption even in this life, When the deep ignorance *which occasions duality* is entirely destroyed, the mortal become immortal: This is the only doctrine which *the Vedant* inculcates.

There are one hundred and one tubes connected with the heart, one of *which, called Sookhumna,* proceeds :to **the** head : The soul of a devotee proceeding through the hundred

and first, is carried to the mansion of the immortal Bruhmd; and those of others, which ascend by other tubes, assume different bodies, *according to the evil or good acts which they perform.*

The omnipresent eternal spirit resides always within that space of the human heart which is as large as a finger: Man should, by firmness of mind, separate that spirit from the body, in the same manner as the pith is removed from the plant Moonju: *that is, the spirit should be considered totally distinct from matter and the effects of matter*—and man should know that separated spirit to be pure and eternal.

Having thus acquired this divine doctrine, imparted by the God of death, with every thing belonging to it, Nuchiketa, freed from the consequences of good or evil acts, and from mortality, was absorbed into God; and whatever person also can acquire that knowledge, shall obtain absorption.

End of the Kut'h-opunishud.

TRANSLATION

OF THE

ISHOPANISHAD,

ONE OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE

YAJUR VEDA ;

ACCORDING TO THE GLOSS OF THE CELEBRATED

SHANCARACHARYA:

ESTABLISHING THE

UNITY AND INCOMPREHENSIBILITY

OF

THE SUPREME BEING;

AND THAT

HIS WORSHIP ALONE

CAN LEAD TO ETERNAL BEATITUDE.

CALCUTTA;

1823.

PREFACE.

THE most learned Vyasa shows', in his work of the Vedant, that all the texts of the Ved, with one consent, prove but the Divinity of that Being, who is out of the reach of comprehension and beyond all description. For the use of the public, I have made a concise translation of that celebrated Work into Bengalee, arid the present is an endeavour to translate* the principal Chapters of the Ved, in conformity to the Comments of the great Sharikar-Achafya. The translation of the Ishopanishad belonging to the Yajur, the second division of the Veds, being already completed, I have put it into the press ;† and the others will successively be printed, as soon as their translation is completed. It is evident, from those authorities, that the sole regulator of the Universe is but one, who is omnipresent, far surpassing our powers of comprehension ; above external sense ; and whose worship is the chief duty of mankind and the sole cause of eternal beatitude ; and that all that bear figure and appellation are inventions. Should it be asked, whether the assertions found in the Puranas‡ and Taritras, etc., respecting the' worship of the several gods and goddesses, are false, or whether Puranats and Tantras are not included in the Shastra, the answer is this :—The Purana and Tantra,§ etc., are of course to be considefred as Shastray for they repeatedly

* I must confess hew much I feel indebted to Doctor H. H. Wilson, in my translations from Sunskrit into Eng fish, for the user of his Sunskrit and English Dictionary.

† Wherever any comment, upon which the sense of the original depends, is added to the original, it will be found written in italics.

‡ Said to have been written by Vyas.

§ Supposed to have been composed by Shiva.

declare God to be one and above the apprehension of external and internal senses ; they indeed expressly declare the divinity of many gods and goddesses, and the modes of their worship ; but they reconcile those contradictory assertions by affirming frequently, that the directions to worship any figured beings are only applicable to those who are incapable of elevating their minds to the idea of an invisible Supreme Being, in order that such persons, by fixing their attention on those invented figures, may be able to restrain themselves from vicious temptations, and that those that are competent for the worship of the invisible God, should disregard the worship of Idols. I repeat a few of these declarations as follows. The authority of Jamadagni is thus quoted by the great Raghunandan : " For the benefit of those who are inclined to worship, figures are invented to serve as representations of God, who is merely understanding, and has no second, no parts nor figure ; consequently, to these representatives, either male or female forms and other circumstances are fictitiously assigned. " In the second Chapter of the first part of the Vishnu Purana it is said, " God is without figure, epithet, definition or description. He is without defect, not liable to annihilation, change, pain or birth; we can only say, That he, who is the eternal being, is God." " Th6 vulgar look for their gods in water ; men of more extended knowledge in celestial bodies ; the ignorant in wood, bricks, and stones; but learned men in the universal soul." In the 84th Chapter of the tenth division of the Sri Bhagavat, Crishna says to Vyas and others : " It is impossible for those who consider pilgrimage as devotion, and believe that the divine nature exists in the image, to look up to, communicate with, to petition and to revere true believers in God. He who views as the soul this body formed of phlegm, wind and bile, or regards only wife, children, and relations as himself (that is, he who neglects to contemplate the nature of the soul), he who attributes a divine nature to earthen images, and believes

in the holiness of water, yet pays not such respect to those who are endowed with a knowledge of God, is as an ass amongst cows."

In the 9th Chapter of the Cularnava it is written: "A knowledge of the Supreme Being, who is beyond the power of expression and unchangeable, being acquired, all gods and goddesses, and their texts which represent them, shall become slaves." After a knowledge of the Supreme Being has been attained, there is no need to attend to ceremonies prescribed by Shastras—no want of a fan should be felt, when a soft southern wind is found to refresh." The Mahanirvana says, " Thus corresponding to the natures of different powers or qualities, numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those who are not possessed of sufficient understanding." From the foregoing quotations it is evident, that though the Veds, Puranas, and Tantras, frequently assert the existence of the plurality of gods and goddesses, and prescribe the modes of their worship for men of insufficient understanding, yet they have also declared in*a hundred other places, that these passages are to be taken merely in a figurative sense.

It cannot be alleged in support of Idolatry, that •" although a knowledge of God is certainly, above all things, still as it is impossible to acquire that knowledge, men should of course worship figured Gods ; " for, had it been impossible to attain a knowledge of the Supreme Being, the Veds and Puranas, as well as Tantras, would not have instructed mankind to aim at such attainment; as it is not to be supposed that directions to acquire what is obviously unattainable could be given by the Shastra, or even by a man of common sense. Should the Idolator say, " That the acquisition of a knowledge **of** God, although it is not impossible, is most difficult of comprehension," I will agree with him in that point; but **infer from it,** that we ought, therefore, the more to exert **ourselves** to acquire that knowledge ; but I highly lament **to observe,**

that so far from endeavouring to make such an acquisition, the very proposal frequently excites his anger and displeasure.

Neither can it be alleged that the Veds, Puranas, etc., teach both the adoration of the Supreme Being and that of celestial gods and goddesses, but that the former is intended for Yatis, or those that are bound by their profession to forsake all worldly considerations, and the latter for Laymen ; for, it is evident from the 48th Text of the 3d Chapter of the Vedant that a householder also is required to perform the worship of the Supreme Being.

Menu, also, the chief of Hindoo lawgivers, after having prescribed all the varieties of rites and ceremonies, in Chapter 12th, Text 92, says, "Thus must the chief of the twice-born, though he neglect the ceremonial rites mentioned in the Shastras, be diligent in attaining a knowledge of God, in controlling his organs of sense, and in repeating the Ved."

Again in the 4th Chapter, in describing the duties of Laymen, the same author says, " Some, who well know the ordinances for the oblations, do not perform externally the five great sacraments, but continually make offerings in their own organs *of sensation and intellect"*

" Some constantly sacrifice their breath in their speech, *when they instruct others of God aloud,* and their speech in their breath, *when they meditate in silence,* perceiving in their speech and breath thus employed the imperishable fruit of a sacrificial offering."

" Other Brahmins incessantly perform those sacrifices only, seeing with the eye of divine learning, that the scriptural knowledge is the root of every ceremonial observance."

In the Yagnyavalca it is written :—" Even a house-holer, who acquires a livelihood honestly, has faith in the Supreme Being, shows hospitality *to* his guests, performs sacramental rites to his forefathers, and is in the practice of telling truth, shall be absorbed into the Supreme Essence." Should it be said, "It still remains unacountable, that not-

withstanding the Veds and Puranas repeatedly declare the unity of the Supreme Being, and direct mankind to adore him alone, yet the generality of Hindoos have a contrary faith, and continue to practise idolatry," I would in answer request attention to the foundation on which the practical part of the Hindoo religion is built. Many learned Brahmins are perfectly aware of the absurdity of idolatry, and are well informed of the nature of the purer mode of divine worship. But as in the rites, ceremonies, and festivals of idolatry, they find the source of their comforts and fortune, they not only never fail to protect idol worship from all attacks, but even advance and encourage it to the utmost of their power, by keeping the knowledge of their scriptures concealed from the rest of the people. Their followers too, codfiding in these leaders, feel gratification in the idea of the Divine Nature residing in a being resembling themselves in birth, shape, and propensities; and are naturally delighted with a mode of worship agreeable to the senses, though destructive of moral principles, and the fruitful parent of prejudice and superstition.

Some Europeans, indued with high principles of liberality, but unacquainted with the ritual part of Hindoo idolatry, are disposed to palliate it by an interpretation which, though plausible, is by no means well founded. They are willing to imagine, that the idols which the Hindoos worship, are not viewed by them in the light of gods or as real personifications of the divine attributes, but merely as instruments for raising their minds to the contemplation of those attributes, which ^re respectively represented by different figures. I have frequently had occasion to remark, that many Hindoos also who are conversant with the English language, finding this interpretation a more plausible apology for idolatry than any with which they are furnished by their own guides, do hot fail to avail themselves of it, though in repugnance both to their faith and to their practice. The declarations of this

description of Hindoos naturally tend to confirm the original idea of such Europeans, who from the extreme absurdity of pure unqualified idolatry, deduce an argument against its existence. It appears to them impossible for men, even in the very last degree of intellectual darkness, to be so far misled as to consider a mere image of wood or of stone as a *human being,* much less as divine existence. With a view, therefore, to do away any misconception of this nature which may have prevailed, I beg leave to submit the following considerations.

Hindoos of the present age, with a very few exceptions, have not the least idea that it is to the attributes of the Supreme Being, as figuratively represented by shapes corresponding to the nature of those attributes, they offer adoration and worship under the denomination of gods and goddesses. On the contrary, the slightest investigation will clearly satisfy every inquirer, that it makes a material part of their system to hold as articles of faith all those particular circumstances, which are essential to belief in the independent existence of the objects of their idolatry as deities clothed with divine power.

Locality of habitation and a mode of existence analogous to their own views of earthly things, are uniformly ascribed to each particular god. Thus the devotees of Siva, misconceiving the real spirit of the Scriptures, not. only place an implicit credence in the separate existence of Siva, but even regard him as an omnipotent being, the greatest of all the divinities, who, as they say, inhabit the northern mountain of Cailas ; and.that he is accompanied by two wives and several children, and surrounded with numerous attendants. In like manner the followers of Vishnu, mistaking the allegorical representations of the Sastras for relations of real facts, believe him to be chief over all other gods, and that he resides with his wife and attendants on the summit of heaven. Similar opinions are also held by the worshippers of Cali, in respect to that goddess. And in fact, the same observations

are equally applicable to every class of Hindoo devotees in regard to their respective gods and goddesses. And so tenacious are those devotees in respect to the honour due to their chosen divinities, that when they meet in such holy places as Haridwar, Pryag, Siva-Canchi, or Vishnu-Canchi in the Dekhin, the adjustment of the point of precedence not only occasions the warmest verbal altercations, but sometimes even blows and violence. Neither do they regard the images of those gods merely in the light of instruments for elevating the mind to the conception of those supposed beings ; they are simply in themselves made objects of worship. For whatever Hindoo purchases an idol in the market, or constructs one with his own hands, or has one made under his own superintendence, it is his invariable practice to perform certain ceremonies, called Pran Pratisht'ha, or the endowment of animation ; by which he believes that its nature is changed from that of the mere materials of which it is formed, and that it acquires not only life but supernatural powers. Shorly afterwards, if the idol be of the masculine gender, he marries it to a feminine one, with no less pomp and magnificence than he celebrates the nuptials of his own children. The mysterious process is now complete, and the god and goddess are esteemed the arbiters of his destiny, and continually receive his most ardent adoration.

At the same time, the worshipper of images ascribes to them at once the opposite natures of human and of superhuman beings. In attention to their supposed wants as living beings, he is seen feeding, or pretending to feed them every morning and evening ; and as in the hot season he is careful to fan them, so in the cold he is equally regardful of their comfort, covering them by day with warm clothing, and placing them at night in a snug bed. But superstition does not find a limit here : the acts and speeches of the idols, and their assumption of various shapes and colours, are gravely related by the Brahmins, and with all the marks of

veneration are firmly believed by their deluded followers. Other practices they have with regard to those idols which decency forbids me to explain. In thus endeavouring to remove a mistake, into which I have reason to believe many European gentlemen have been led by a benevolent wish to find an excuse for the errors of my countrymen, it is a considerable gratification to me to find that the latter have begun to be so far sensible of the absurdity of their real belief and practices, as to find it convenient to shelter them under such a cloak, however flimsy and borrowed. The adoption of such a subterfuge encourages me greatly to hope, that they will in time abandon what they are sensible cannot be defended ; and that, forsaking the superstition of idolatry, they will embrace the rational worship of the God of Nature, as enjoined by the Veds, and confirmed by the dictates of common sense.

The argument which is frequently alleged in support of idolatry is, that " those who believe God to be omnipresent, as declared by the doctrines of the Vedant, are required by the tenets of such belief to look upon all existing creatures as God, and to shew divine respect to birds, beasts, men, women, vegetables, and all other existences; and as practical conformity to such doctrines is almost impossible, the worship of figured gods should be admitted." This misrepresentation, I am sorry to observe, entirely serves the purpose intended, by frightening Hindoos in general from attending to the pure worship of the Supreme Regulator of the universe. But I am confident that the least reflection on the subject will clear up this point beyond all doubt ; for the Vedant is well known as a work which inculcates only the unity of God ; but if every existing creature should be taken for a god by the followers of the Vedant, the doctrines of that work must be admitted to be much more at variance with that idea than those of the advocates of idolatry, as the latter are contented with the recognition of

only a few millions of gods and goddesses, but the V£d£nt in that case must be supposed to admit the divinity of every living creature in nature. The fact is, that the Vedant, by declaring that "God is everywhere, and everything is in God," means that nothing is absent from God, and nothing bears real existence except by the volition of God, whose existence is the sole support of the conceived existence of the universe, which is acted upon by him in the same manner as a human body is by a soul. But God is at the same time quite different from what we see or feel.

The following texts of the Vedant are to this effect (11th Text of the 2nd Section of the 3rd Chapter of the Vedant): "That being, which is distinct from matter, and from those which are contained in matter, is not various, because he is declared by all the Véds to be one beyond description ;" and again, " The Ved has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding." Morever, if we look at the conduct of the ancient true believers in God, as Janaca, the celebrated prince of Mithila, Vasisht'ha, Sanaca, Vyasa, Sancracharyu, and others whose characters as believers in one God are well known to the public by their doctrines and works, which are still in circulation, we shall find that these teachers, although they declared their faith in the omnipresent God according to the doctrines of the Vedant, assigned to every creature the particular character and respect he was entitled to. It is, however, extremely remarkable, that the very argument which they employ to shew the impossibility of practical conformity to faith in the omnipresence of God may be alleged against every system of their own idolatry ; for the believers in the godhead of Crishna, and the devotees of Cali, as well as the followers of Siva, believe firmly in the omnipresence of Crishna,* Cali,†

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* *Vide 10*th Chapter of the Gita.

† *Vide* 23rd Text of the Chap, 11th of the Debi-Mahatmya.

and Siva* respectively. The anthorities, then, for the worship of those gods, in declaring their omnipresence, would according to their own argument, enjoin the worship of every creature as much as of those supposed divinities. Omnipresence, however, is an attribute much more consonant with the idea of a Supreme Being than with that of any fictitious figure to which they pay divine honours! Another argument is, that " No man can have, as it is said by the Sastra, a desire of knowledge respecting the Supreme Being, unless his mind be purified; and as idol worship purifies men's minds, it should be therefore attended to." I admit the truth of the first part of this argument, as a desire of the acquisition of a knowledge of God is an indication of an improved mind; consequently whenever we see a person possessed of that desire, we should attribute it to some degree of purification; but I must affirm with the V£d, that purity of mind is the consequence of divine worship, and not of any superstitious practices.

The Vrihadaranyaca says, "Adore God alone." Again, " Nothing excepting the Supreme Being should be adored by wise men." " God alone rules the mind and relieves it from impurity."

The last of the principal arguments which are alleged in favour of idolatry is, that it is established by custom. " Let the authors of the Véds, Purans, and Tantras," it is said, assert what they may in favour of devotion to the Supreme Being, but idol worship has been practised for so many centuries that custom renders it proper to continue that worship." It is however evident to every one possessed of common sense, that custom or fashion is quite different from divine faith; the latter proceeding from spiritual authorities and correct reasoning, and the former being merely the fruit of vulgar caprice.

* *Vide* Rudra-Mahatmya in the Dan-Dharma.

What can justify a man, who believes in the inspiration of his * religious books, in neglecting the direct authorities of the same works, and subjecting himself entirely to custom and fashion, which are liable to perpetual changes and depend upon popular whim ? But it cannot be passed unnoticed that those who practise idolatry and defend it under the shield of custom, have been violating their customs almost every twenty years, for the sake of little convenience, or to promote their wordly advantage : a few instances which are most commonly and publicly practised, I beg leave to state here.

1st.. The whole community in Bengal, with very few exceptions, have, since the middle of last century, forsaken their ancient modes of the performance of ceremonial rites of religion, and followed the precepts of the late Raghunandan, and consequently differ in the most essential points of ceremonies from the natives of Behar, Tirhoot, and Benares. 2nd. The system of their sub-divisions in each caste, with the modes of marriage and intermarriage, is also a modern introduction altogether contrary to their law and ancient customs. 3rd. The profession of instructing European gentlemen in the Veds, Smriti and Purans, is a violation of their long established custom ; and, 4th. The supplying their European guests with wine and victuals in presence of their gods and goddesses is also a direct breach of custom and law. I may conclude this subject with an appeal to the good sense of my countrymen, by asking them, " whose advice appears the most disinterested and most rational—that of those who, concealing your scriptures from you, continually teach you thus, ' Believe whatever we may say—don't examine or even touch your scriptures, neglect entirely your reasoning faculties—do not only consider us, whatever may be our principles, as gods on earth, but humbly adore and propitiate us by sacrificing to us the greater part (if not the whole) of your property:' or that of the man who lays

your scriptures and their comments as well as their translations before you, and solicits you to examine their purport, without neglecting the proper and moderate use of reason; and to attend strictly to their directions, by the rational performance of your duty to your sole Creator, and to your fellow-creatures, and also to pay true respect to those who think and act righteously." I hope no one can be so prejudiced as to be unable to discern which advice is most calculated to lead him to the best road to both temporal and eternal happiness.

INTRODUCTION.

THE physical powers of man are limited, and when viewed comparatively, sink into insignificance; while in the same ratio, his moral faculties rise in our estimation, as embracing a wide sphere of action, and possessing a capability of almost boundless improvement. If the short duration of human life be contrasted with the great age of the univese, and the limited extent of bodily strength with the many objects'^ to which there is a necessity of applying it, we must necessrily be disposed to entertain but a very humble opinion of our own nature ; and nothing perhaps is so well calculated to restore our self-complacency as the contemplation of our more extensive moral powers, together with the highly beneficial objects which the appropriate exercise of them may produce.

On the other hand, sorrow and remorse can scarcely fail, sooner or later, to be the portion of him who is conscious of having neglected opportunities of rendering benefit to his fellow-creatures. From considerations like these it has been that I (although born a Brahmin, and instructed in my youth in all the principles of that sect), being thoroughly convinced of the lamentable errors of my countrymen, have been stimulated to employ every means in my power to improve their minds, and lead them to the knowledge of a purer system of morality. Living constantly amongst Hindoos of different sects and professions, I have had ample opportunity of observing the superstitious puerilities into which they have been thrown by their self-interested guides, who, in defiance of the law as well as of common sense, have succeeded but too well in conducting them to the temple of idolatry ; and while they hid from their view the true substance of morality,

your scriptures and their comments as well as their translations before you, and solicits you to examine their purport, without neglecting the proper and moderate use of reason ; and to attend strictly to their directions, by the rational performance of your duty to your sole Creator, and to your fellow-creatures, and also to pay true respect to those who think and act righteously." I hope no one can be so prejudiced as to be unable to discern which advice is most calculated to lead him to the best road to both temporal and eternal happiness.

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have infused into their simple hearts a weak attachment for its mere shadow.

For the chief part of the theory and practice of Hindooism, I am sorry to say, is made to consist in the adoption of a peculiar mode of diet; the least aberration from which (even though the conduct of the offender may in other respects be pure and blameless) is not only visited with the severest censure, but actually punished by exclusion from the society of his family and friends. In a word, he is doomed to undergo what is commonly called loss of caste.

On the contrary, the rigid observance of this grand article of Hindoo faith is considered in so high a light as to compensate for every moral defect. Even the most atrocious crimes weigh little or nothing in the balance against the supposed guilt of its violation.

Murder, theft, or perjury, though brought home to the party by a judicial sentence, so far from inducing loss of caste, is visited in their society with no peculiar mark of infamy or disgrace.

A trifling present to the Brahmin, commonly called *Prayaschit*, with the performance of a few idle ceremonies, are held as a sufficient atonement for all those crimes ; and the delinquent is at once freed from all temporal inconvenience, as well as all dread of future retribution.

My reflections upon these solemn truths have been most painful for many years. I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret, the obstinate adherence of my countrymen to their fatal system of idolatry, inducing, for the sake of propitiating their supposed Deities, the violation of every humane and social feeling. And this in various instances; but more especially in the dreadful acts of self-destruction and the immolation of the nearest relations, under the delusion of conforming to sacred religious rites. I have never ceased, I repeat, to contemplate these practices with the strongest feelings of regret, and to view in them the

moral debasement of a race who, I cannot help thinking, are capable of better things ; whose susceptibility, patience, and mildness of character, render them worthy of a better destiny. Under these impressions, therefore, I have been impelled to lay before them genuine translations of parts of their scripture, which inculcates not only the enlightened worship of one God, but the purest principles of morality, accompanied with such notices as I deemed requisite to oppose the arguments employed by the Brahmins in defence of their beloved system. Most earnestly do I pray that the whole may, sooner or later, prove efficient in producing on the minds of Hindoos in general, a conviction of the rationality of believing in and adoring the Supreme Being only; together with a complete perception and practice of that grand and comprehensive moral principle—*Do unto others as ye would be done by.*

ISHOPANISHAD.

OF THE

YAJUR VEDA.

1ST. ALL the material extension in this world, whatsoever it may be, should be considered as clothed with the existence of the Supreme regulating spirit: by thus abstracting thy *mind from worldly thoughts,* preserve thyself *from self sufficiency,* and entertain not a covetous regard for property belonging to any individual.

2nd. Let man desire to live a whole century, practising, in this world, during that time, religious rites; because for such A SELFISH MIND AS THINE, besides the observance of these rites, there is no other mode the practice of which would not subject thee to evils.

3rd. THOSE THAT NEGLECT THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT, *either by devoting themselves solely to the performance of the ceremonies of religion, or by living destitute of religious ideas, shall, after death,* ASSUME THE STATE OF DEMONS, *such as that of the celestial gods, and of other created beings,* WHICH ARE SURROUNDED WITH THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE.

4th. The Supreme Spirit is one and unchangeable : he proceeds more rapidly than the comprehending power of the mind: Him no external sense can apprehend, for a knowledge of him outruns even the internal sense: He, though free from motion, seems to advance, leaving behind human intellect, which strives to attain a knowledge respecting him: He being the eternal ruler, the atmosphere regulates under him the whole system of the world.

5th. He, the Supreme Being, seems to move everywhere, although he in reality has no motion ; he seems to be distant *from those who have no wish to attain a knowledge respecting him,* and he seems to be near *to those who feel a wish to know him:* but, in fact, He pervades the internal and external parts of this whole universe.

6th. He, who perceives the whole universe in the Supreme Being *(that is, he who perceives that the material existence is merely dependent upon the existence of the Supreme Spirit) ;* and who also perceives the Supreme Being in the whole universe *(that is, he who perceives that the Supreme Spirit extends over all material extension) ;* does not feel contempt *towards any creature whatsoever,*

7th. When a person possessed of true knowledge conceives that God extends over the whole universe *(that is, that God furnishes every particle of the universe with the light of his existence),* how can he, as an observer of the real unity of the prevading Supreme existence, be affected with infatuation or grievance ?

8th. He overspreads all creatures: is merely spirit, without the form either of any minute body, or of an extended one, which is liable to impression or organization : He is pure, perfect, omniscient, the ruler of the intellect, omnipresent, and the self-existent: He has from eternity been assigning to all creatures their respective purposes.

9th. Those observers of religious rites that perform only the worship of the sacred fire, and oblations to sages, to ancestors, to men, and the other creatures, without regarding the worship of celestial gods, shall enter into the dark regions: and those practisers of religious ceremonies who habitually worship the celestial gods only, disregarding the worship of the sacred fire, and oblations to sages, to ancestors, to men, and to other creatures, shall enter into a region still darker than the former.

loth. It is said that adoration of the celestial gods produces one consequence; and that the performance of the worship of sacred fire, and oblations to sages, to ancestors, to men, and to other creatures, produce another: thus have we heard from learned men, who have distinctly explained the subject to us.

nth. Of those observers of ceremonies whosoever, knowing that adoration of celestial gods, as well as the worship of the sacred fire, and oblation to sages, to ancestors, to men, and to other creatures, should be observed alike by the same individual, performs them both, will, by means of the latter, surmount the obstacles presented by natural temptations, and will attain the state of the celestial gods through the practice of the former'.

12th. Those observers of religious rites who worship Prakriti * alone, shall enter into the dark region: and those practisers of religious ceremonies that are devoted to worship solely the prior operating sensitive particle, allegorically called Brahmá, shall enter into a region much more dark than the former.

13th. It is said that one consequence may be attained by the worship of Brahmá, and another by the adoration of Prakriti. Thus have we heard from learned men, who have distinctly explained the subject to us.

14th. Of those observers of ceremonies, whatever person,, knowing that the adoration of Prakriti and that of Brahmá should be together observed by the same individual, performs them both, will by means of the latter overcome indigence, and will attain the state of Prakriti, through the practice of the former.

15th. "Thou hast, O sun," *(says to the sun a person agitated on the approach of death, who during his life attended to the performance of religious rites, neglecting*

* Prakriti (ornatore) who, though insensible, influenced by, the Supreme Spirit, operates throughout the universe*

the attainment of a knowledge of God,) " thou hast, O Sun, concealed by thy illuminating body the way to the true Beingy who rules in thee. Take off that veil for the guidance of me thy true devotee. "

16th. "O thou" (continues he), "who nourishest the *world,* movest singly, and who dost regulate the *whole mundane* system—O sun, son of Cushyup, disperse thy rays for my passage, and withdraw thy violent light, so that I may by thy grace behold thy most prosperous aspect." *" Why should I" (says he, again retracting himself on reflecting upon the true divine nature)," why should I entreat the sun, as* I AM WHAT ME IS," *that is, "the Being who rules in the sun rules also in met."*

17th. "Let my breath," *resumes he,* "be absorbed *after death* into the wide atmosphere; and let this my body be burnt to ashes. O my intellect, think *now on what may be beneficial to me.* O fire, remember what religious rites I have hitherto performed. "

18th. "O illuminating fire," *continues he,* "observing all our religious practices, carry us by the right path to the enjoyment of the consequence of our deeds, and put an end to our sins ; we being now unable to perform thy various rites, offer to thee our last saluation. " *

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* This example from the Veds, of the unhappy agitation and wavering of an idolater on the approach of death, ought to make men reflect seriously on the miserable consequence of fixing their mind on any other object of adoration but the one Supreme Being.

A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH OF A SUNGSKRIT TRACT, INCULCATING THE DIVINE WORSIP; ESTEEMED BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE REVELATION OF THE VEDS AS MOST APPROPRIATE TO THE NATURE OF THE SUPREME BEING.

CALCUTTA:

1827.

PRESCRIPT

FOR

OFFERING SUPREME WORSHIP

BY MEANS OF

THE GAYUTREE,

THE MOST SACRED TEXT OF THE VEDS,

THUS says the illustrious Munoo: "The three great immutable words (Bhooh, Bhoovuh, Swuh, or earth, space, heaven), preceded by the letter Om ;* and also the Gayutree,

* Om, when considered as one letter uttered by the help of one articulation, is the symbol of the Supreme Spirit. It is derived from the radical अव् to preserve, with the affix मन्. "One letter (Om) is the emblem of the Most High."—*Munoo*, II. 83. "This one letter, Om, is the emblem of the Supreme Being."—*Bhuguvudgeeta*, It is true that this emblem conveys two sounds, that of *0* and of *m*, nevertheless it is held to be one letter in the above sense; and we meet with instances even in the ancient and modern languages of Europe that can justify such privileges; such as Ξ (Xi) and Ψ (Psi), reckoned single letters in Greek, and Q, W, X, in English and others. But when considered as a trilateral word consisting of अ, उ, म, Om implies the three Veds, the three state of human nature, the divisions of the universe, and the three deities, Bruhma, Vishnoo, and Shivu, agents in the creation, preservation, and destruction of this world; or, properly speaking, the three principal attributes of the Supreme Being personified as Bruhma, Vishnoo, and Shivu. In this sense it implies, in fact, the universe controlled by the Supreme Spirit.

In all the Hindoo treatises of philosophy (the Poorans or didactic parabies excepted), the methodical collection or expansion of matter is on-

consisting of three measured lines, must be considered as the entrance to divine bliss."*

"Whoever shall repeat them day by day, for three years, without negligence, shall approach the most High God, become *free* as air, and *acquire after death* an ethereal essence."

"From the three Veds the most exalted Bruhma successively milked out the three lines of this sacred text, beginning with *the word* Tut and entitled Savitree or Gayutree."

Yogee Yajnuvulkyu also declares, "By means of Om; Bhooh, Bhoovuh, and Swuh; and the Gayutree, collectively or each of the three singly, the most High God, the source of intellect, should be worshipped."

So Bruhma himself formerly defined Bhooh, Bhoovuh, Swuh, (Earth, Space, Heaven) as the body of the Supreme Intelligence ; hence these *three words* are called the Defined."

[Those that maintain the doctrine of the universe being the body of the Supreme Spirit, found their opinion upon the following considerations :

Ist. That there are innumerable millions of bodies, properly speaking worlds, in the infinity of space.

2ndly. That they move, mutually preserving their regular intervals between each other, and that they maintain each

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derstood by the term creation, the gradual or sudden perversion of order is intended by destruction, and the power which wards off the latter from the former is meant by preservation.

The reason the authors offer for this interpretation is, that they, in common with others, are able to acquire a notion of a Superintending Power, though unfelt and invisible, solely through their observation of material phenomena; and that should they reject this medium of conviction, and force upon themselves a belief of the production of matter from nothing, and of its liability to entire annihilation, then nothing would remain in the ordinary course of reasoning to justify their maintaining any longer a notion of that unknown Supreme Superintending Power.

* The last clause admits of another interpretation, *viz.*, "must be considered as the mouth, *or principal part* of the Veds."

other by producing effects primary or secondary, as the members of the body support each other.

3rdly. That those bodies, when viewed collectively, are considered one, in the same way as the members of an animal body or of a machine, taken together, constitute one whole.

4thly. Any material body whose members move methodically, and afford support to each other in a manner sufficient for their preservation, must be actuated either by an internal guiding power named the soul, or by an external one as impulse.

5thly. It is maintained that body is as infinite as space, because body is found to exist in space as far as our perceptions, with the naked eye or by the aid of instruments, enable us to penetrate.

6thly. If body be infinite as space, the power that guides its members must be internal, and therefore styled the SOUL, and not external, since there can be no existence, even in thought, without the idea of location.

Hence this sect suppose that the Supreme all-pervading power is the soul of the universe, both existing from eternity to eternity; and that the former has somewhat the same influence over the universe as the individual soul has over the individual body.

They argue further, that in proportion as the internally impelled body is excellent in in its construction, the directing soul must be considered excellent. Therefore, inasmuch as the universe is infinite in extent, and is arranged with infinite skill, the soul by which it is animated must be infinite in every perfection.]

He (Yajnuvulkyu) again expounds the meaning of the Gayutree in three passages :

" We, say the adorers of the Most High, meditate on the Supreme and Omnipresent Internal Spirit of this splendid Sun. We meditate on the same Supreme Spirit, earnestly

sought for by such as dread further mortal birth; who,, residing in every body as the all-pervading soul and controller of the mind, constantly directs our intellect and intellectual operations towards *the acquisition of* virtue, wealth, physical enjoyment, and final beatitude."

So, at the end of the Gayutree, the utterance of the letter Om" is commanded by the sacred passage cited by Goonu-Vishnoo: " A Brahmun shall in every instance pronounce Om, at ths beginning and at the end; for unless the letter Om, precede, *the desirable consequence* will fail; and unless it follow, it will not be long retained."

That the letter Om, which is pronounced at the beginning and at the end *of the Gayutree,* expressly signifies the Most High, is testified by the Véd : *viz.,* " Thus through the help of Om, you contemplate the Supreme Spirit." *(Moonduc Oopunishud.)*

Munoo also calls to mind the purport of the same passage ; " All rites ordained in the Véd, such as oblation to fire and solemn offerings, pass away ; but the letter Om is considered that which passes not away ; since it is *a symbol of* the most High the Lord of created beings."

" By the sole repetition *of Om and the Gayutree,* a Brahmun may indubitably attain beatitude. Let him perform or not perform any other religious rites, he being a friend *to all creatures* is styled a knower of God."

So Yogee Yajnuvulkyu says: " God is declared to be the object signified, and Om to be the term signifying: By means of a knowledge even of the letter Om, the symbol,. God becomes propitious."

In the Bhuguvudgeeta : " Om* (the cause), Tut† (that),

* " Om " implies the Being on whom all objects, either visible or in* visible, depend in their formation, continuance, and change.

† " Tut" implies the being that can be described only by the demonstrative pronoun " that'' and not by any particular definition*

Sut* (existing), these are considered three kinds of description of the Supreme Being."

In the concluding part of the commentary on the Gayutree fay the ancient Bhuttu Goonu-Vishnoo, the meaning of the passage is briefly given by the same author.

" He, the spirit who is thus described, guides us. He, as the soul of the three mansions *(viz.,* earth, space, and heaven), of water, light, moisture, and the individual soul, of all moving and fixed objects, and of Bruhma, Vishnoo, Shivu, the Sun and other gods of various descriptions, the Most High Gods, illuminating, like a brilliant lamp, the seven mansions, having carried my individual soul, as spirit, to the seventh heaven, the mansion of the worshippers of God called the True mansion, the residence of Bruhma, absorbs it (my soul), through his divine spirit, into his own divine essence. The worshipper, thus contemplating, shall repeat the Gayutree."

Thus it is said by Rughoonundun Bhuttacharyu, a modern expounder of law in the country of Gourr, when interpreting the passage beginning with " Prunuvu Vyahritibhyam :" " By means of pronouncing Om and Bhooh, Bhoovuh, Swuh, and the Gayutree, all signifying the Most High, and reflecting on their meaning, the worship of God shall be performed, and his grace enjoyed.

And also in the Muha Nirvan Tuntru: " In like manner, among all texts the Gayutree is declared to be the most

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* " Sut" implies what " truly exists" in one condition independent of others. These three terms collectively imply, that the object Contemplated through " Om" can be described only as "that" which "is existing."

The first term " Om" bears a striking similarity, both in sound and application, to the participle *"my"* of the verb "equl" to be, in Greek,; and it is therefore not very improbable that one might have had its origin from the other. As to the similarity in sound, it is too obvious to require illustration ; and a reference to the Septuagint will shew that *wy* like " Om " is applied to Jeho - the ever existing God. Exodus, iii. 14. Etc., etc.

excellent: the worshipper shall repeat it when inwardly parev reflecting on the meaning of it. If the Gayutree be repeated with Om and the Vyahriti (viz., Bhooh, Bhoovuh, Swuh), it excels all other theisticai knowledge, in producing immediate bliss. Whosever repeats it in the morning or evening or during the night, while meditating on the Supreme Being, being freed from all past sins, shall not be inclined to act unrighteously. The worshipper shall first pronounce Om, then the three Vyahritis, and afterwards the Gauytree of three lines, and shall finish it with the term Om. We meditate on him from whom proceed the continuance, perishing, and production *of all things;* who spreads over the three mansions; that eternal Spirit, who inwardly rules the sun and all living creatures; most desirable and all-pervading ; and who, residing in intellect, directs the operations of the intellectual power of all of us material beings. The worshipper, by repeating every day these three texts expressing the above meaning, attains all desirable objects without any other religious observance or austerity. 'One only without a second' is the doctrine maintained by all the Oopunishuds: that imperishable and incomprensible Being is understood by these three texts. Whoever repeats them once, or ten, or a hundred, times, either alone or with many others, attains bliss in a proportionate degree. After he has completed the repetition, he shall again meditate on Him who is one only without a second, and all-pervading: thereby all religious observances, though not performed, shall have been virtually performed. Any one, whether a householder or not, whether a Brahmun or not, all have equal right to the use of these texts as found in the Tuntru."

Here Om, in the first instance, signifies that Supreme Being who is the sole cause of the continuance, perishing, and production of all worlds. " He from whom these creatures are produced, by whom those that are produed exist, and to whom after death they re n, is the Supreme Being,

whom thou dost seek to know." The text of the Ved quoted by the revered Shunkur Acharyu in the Commentary on the first text of the Vedant Durshun.

The doubt whether or not that cause signified by " Om " exists separately from these effects, having arisen, the second text, Bhoor Bhoovuh Swuh, is next read, explaining that God, the sole cause, eternally exists pervading the universe, " Glorious, invisible, perfect, unbegotten, pervading all, internally and externally is He *the Supreme Spirit."—Moonduk Oopunishud.*

It being still doubted whether or not living creatures large and small in the world act independently of that sole cause, the Gayutree, as the third in order, is read. " Tut Suvitoor vurenyum, Bhurgo devusyu dheemuhi, dhiyo yo nuh pruchoduat." We meditate on that indescribable spirit inwardly ruling the splendid Sun, the express object *of worship.* He does not only inwardly rule the sun, but he, the spirit, residing in and inwardly ruling all us material beings, directs mental operations towards their objects. "He who inwardly rules the sun is the same immortal spirit who inwardly rules thee. *(Chhandoggu Oopunishud).*—" God resides in the heart of all *creatures."—Bhuguvudgeeta.*

The object signified by the three texts being one, their repetition collectively is enjoined. The following is their meaning in brief.

"We meditate on the cause of all, pervading all, and internally ruling all material objects, from the sun down to us and others."

[The following is a literal translation of the Gayutree according to the English idiom: "We meditate on that Supreme spirit of the splendid gun who directs our understandings."

The passage, however, may be rendered somewhat differently by transferring the demonstrative "that" from the words " Supreme Spirit" to the words "splendid sun."

But this does not appear fully to correspond with the above interpretation of Yajnuvulkyu.]

WHILE translating this essay on the Gayutree, I deemed ft proper to refer to the meaning of the text as given by Sip William Jones; whose talents, acquisitions, virtuous life, and impartial research, have rendered his memory an object of love and veneration to all. I feel so much delighted by the excellence of the translation, or rather the paraphrase given by that illustrious character, that with a view to connect his name and his explanation of the passage with this humble treatise, I take the liberty of quoting it here.

The interpretation in question is as follows :

"THE **GAYATRI,** OR HOLIEST VERSE OF THE VEDAS."

" Let us adore the supremacy of *that* divine sun,* the god-head † who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress toward his holy seat.

* * * * *

" What the sun and light are to this visible world, that are the *Supreme good* and *truth* to the intellectual and invisible universe ; and, as our corporeal eyes have a distinct preception of objects enlightened by the sun, thus our souls acquire certain knowledge, by meditating on the light of truth, which emanates from the Being of beings: *that* is the light by which alone our minds can be directed in the path to beatitude."

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* Opposed to the visible luminary.

† *Bhargas,* a word consisting of three consonants, derived from *bha* to shine, *ram,* to delight; *gam,* to move.

A DEFENCE

OF

HINDOO THEISM,

IN REPLY TO THE

ATTACK OF AN ADVOCATE

FOR IDOLATRY

AT MADRAS.

CALCUTTA;

1827.

PREFACE.

THE following sheets contain some remarks in reply to a publication which appeared in the "Madras Courier" of November last, under[1] the signature of Sankara Sastri, in answer to my Abridgment of the Vedant and my Preface to the translation of the Ishopanishad, as well as to my Introduction to the Cenopanishad. The length to which the arguments of the controvertist extended having precluded their appearance in the Calcutia prints, I have taken the liberty of reprinting them along with my own observations on them, in order that the discussion may be brought fully before the public, to whose decision the merits of the question must now be left.

TO THE

EDITOR OF THE "MADRAS COURIER."

SIR,

ON reading your paper, dated 19th November 1816, f found a publication in it taken from a Calcutta paper respecting the theological doctrines of R A M MOHUN ROY, on which I Shall proceed to make a few observations.

In the first part of this publication it is stated : " This eminently learned and indefatigable reformer is proceeding, with unremitting exertions, in the laudable work of enlightening his countryrriert, and reclaiming them from their debasing system of idolatry. Having, for the instruction of the Hindu population of these provinces, translated into Bengalese the principal chapters of the Véds, he has now done a few of them into English, for the gratification of such European gentlemen as interest themselves in the improvement of their fellow-creatures."

In a former paper, also, it was stated that the learned person here mentioned, had " *discovered* " that the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead Was taught in the Puranas and Taritras as well as the Vedas.

The worship of the All-pervading and Supreme Being is the Original doctrine founded on the Védas, Pumas, etc., and is known in general in this, as well as in the other parts of the Peninsula!—this faith is known by the name of *Adwaitam,* which being derived from *dwita* duality, by affixing the privative *a* is the opposite of *dwiatam,* the term usually applied to the belief that admits of more than one first cause : it is impossible to say when it was first revealed, yet, among various conjectures, the probability is, that the revelation of this faith is to be ascribed to Brahma, the

creating power alone, and that it is as ancient, therefore, as the existence of the world.

People of limited understanding, not being able to comprehend the system of worshipping the Invisible Being, have adopted doctrines, and by that means confounded weak minds in remote times; but due punishment was inflicted on those heretics, and religion was very well established throughout India by the Reverend SENKARACHARYAM and his disciples, who, however, did not pretend to *reform* or *discover* them, or assume the title of a *reformer* or *discoverer.*

There are an immense number of books namely, Védás, Sastras, Puranas, Agams, Tantras-Sutras, and Itihas, besides numerous commentaries compiled by many famous theologians, both of ancient and modern times, respecting the doctrine of the worship of the Invisible Being. They are not only written in Sanscrit, but rendered into Pracruta, Telugu, Tamil, Guzerat, Hindoostani, Maratta, Canari, etc., languages, and immemorially studied by a great part of the Hindu nation attached to the Adwaitam faith, and so our ancestors left no room to any person to make *"discoveries "* on the subject, or " *to proceed with unremitting exertion in the laudable work of enlightening his countrymen, and reclaiming them from their debasing system of idolatry."*

From my stating these doctrines to have been anciently translated, I beg it may not be construed that those translations are universally admitted. On the contrary, they are rejected by some and admitted by others, for reason recited as follows :—

First—If the reader of them doubts the truth of the principles explained in the translation, the divine knowledge he acquired by them becomes a doubtful faith, and that doubt cannot be removed unless he compare them with the original work ; in that case the knowledge he lastly acquired becomes superior, and his study in the first instance becomes useless, and the cause of repeating the same work.

Second.—Reading the Scriptures in the vulgar languages is prohibited by the Puranas.

Third.—These translations are omitted by others as useful and interesting in general, and particularly to those who have not sufficient knowledge in Sanscrit.

Not wishing to trouble my readers with the observations necessary to reconcile these three controversial points, I think it proper to leave it to them to judge which of them is admissible.

The Sutra Bhashyam, or the Commentary on the Theological Sutrams of Veda Vyasa, and those on the Uponishets, etc., are in this part of India constantly read and taught by the Brahmins all over the country. Lectures and themes are delivered in the various audiences frequently and purposely held by the Rajahs, Pundits, and other respectable men in the country. The ascribing of the " *discovery* " of a religious tenet so well known and celebrated, to a learned native, cannot therefore be here admitted by a Hindu, and he will not be more astonished at it than he would at hearing that a man had one head and two eyes.

Previously to my proceeding to make any observations respecting idolatrous worship, I think it proper to state how the Supreme Being is defined.

The Vedas, Purans, etc., say that this Being is infinite, eternal, self-intelligent, indivisible, inconsumable, pervading, universal, inconceivable, invisible, unalterable, and almighty. It is not subject either to the mind or senses. The translation of the following Sanscrit slokams will serve to form an idea of its nature.

" He is eternal, he is the splendour of splendour.

" He is supreme and glorious.

"The sun shines not with respect to hun, nor the moon nor lire,"

" Thou hearest without ears,
"Thou smellest without a nose,
" Thou walkest without legs,
" Thou seest without eyes,
" Thou tastest without a tongue.

"Thou hast no gotram, nor birth, nor name, nor shape, nor state, nor place.

" Though thou art thus, yet thou art the Lord of the earth and the heaven.

" In the same manner as the illusive appearance of water, produced by the reflection of the rays in the mirage:

" So the universe shines in. thee, the real and intelligent spirit."

"Thou canst not be known either by the organs or by the mind, as thou art self-resplendent and distinct from elemental being.

" If ignorance be annihilated by knowledge, as darkness by the dawn, thy light will shine like the sun."

"The whole had its birth in thee,

"The whole rests in thee.

" The whole obtains its destruction in thee, like bubbles in water."

The difficulty of attaining the knowledge of this invisible and Almighty Spirit, is evident from the preceding verses, and all the Scriptures and other authorities affirm that the soul, propelled by Maya towards external objects, and obscured by the ignorance of individuality, cannot obtain mo*scham* (salvation) unless it is freed from every impression either of vice and virtue, the illusions of Maya; and until that time, it will continue to undergo various transmigrations, and partake of misery and happiness, the result of its vices and virtues, in the terrestrial, celestial, and infernal worlds,

The eating food, slumbering, fear, love, and other animal functions' and propensities, are common and natural both to the human and brute creation ; they both seek for food and

are subject to slumber. Out of the fear of death, etc., they either attack of fly when opposed by an enemy; but though the intellectual powers of both races are the same in general, and entirely directed towards external objects, yet one human race is endowed with the powers of reason and determination. These, if applied, serve to reason—who is himself? from whence he is come? what is the connexion between him and the Supreme Being? how the spirit in him is illusively inspired, and illusively beheld, and illusively divided from the pervading spirit

The mental powers of every corporeal being are, from the time of its birth, attracted by external objects, and they cannot be iverted towards the individual spirit, or the object meant by the word " I , " without great labour, practice, mental exercise, purification, and the divine assistance; or favouring grace, of the Deity, without which a complete knowledge of his *atmá* or spirit cannot be obtained.

It is said in the Scripture, that the person void of this knowledge does not only remain self-ignorant, but it is decreed by the authorities that he is a self-deceiver, and his ignorance finally proves fatal to himself.

In order to save the human race from the utter destruction occasioned by self-ignorance, Brahma' delivered the divine precepts in the Vedas, both for the use of men of enlightened and limited understanding. These precepts are divided into two parts, namely, Carmocandam, or works, and Gnanacdn-dam, or knowledge, or faith, as European writers express it; these words I understand to mean essentially the same things for what is faith without adequacy of knowledge?

The first prescribes the mode of performing Yagam or Sacrifice, bestowing Danam or Alms, treats of penance, fasting, and of worshipping the Incarnations, in which the Supreme Deity has appeared on the earth for divine purposes, The ceremonies performed according to these modes, forsaking their fruits, are affirmed by the Vedas to be mental

exercises and mental purifications, necessary to obtain the knowledge of the divine nature.

The latter part treats on Theology ahd Metaphysics, on the nature of spirit, of mental abstraction, the subjugation of the passions, etc., the meaning of which the student must attain by reasoning, and must impress it well on the understanding by reflection ; he must behold the Supreme Spirit alike in all things ; he must constantly contemplate the union of his own *atma,* or soul, with the Universal Supreme Spirit, which he must consider unconnected though in all connections, and inactive in all things in action, and must comprehend the whole universe in him alone. The Gnani, or the man that has attained divine knowledge in this manner, should be unaffected in all his actions; the same in praise and insult, in friendship and in enmity, in honour and dishonour, in pleasure and pain, in cold and heat; all his passions should be subdued, and his mind constantly fixed and united with the Universal Spirit.

I must here introduce another extract from the publication to which I have referred. "We understand that on all the great Hindoo festivals the *Friendly Society,* established by him, holds meetings, not only with the view that its members may keep aloof from the idolatrous ceremonies of their countrymen, but also to renew and strengthen their own faith in the purer doctrines which they affirm to be established in the V£ds. At these meetings they have music and dancing, as well as their more superstitious bretheren; but the songs are all expressive of the peculiar tenets of the Monotheists."

It is evident from what is said above of the precepts in the Vedam, that divine knowledge cannot be obtained without purifying the soul, and such purification cannot take place without performing Yagams, bestowing Danamas, by penance, worship, reading theology, and comprehending and reasoning on its meaning; but the *holding of meetings, playing music, singing songs and- dancing,* which are ranked-

among carnal pleasures, are not ordained by scripture as mental purification.

It may be asked why purification cannot be attained by these songs, music, etc., since they are all intended to be expressive of the tenets of Monotheism? I answer, that the completion of every undertaking in the world must take place by its respective means: for example, the thirst must be quenched by water, milk, and suchlike, but not with sand. These, the aforesaid means for quenching thirst, are known by human experience and usage: but the means *to* purify the unknown and invisible powers of the intellect cannot be ascertained by human understanding, but by the precepts revealed by divine wisdom. Therefore, the setting aside the proper means, such as Yagam, penance, worship, etc., and substituting dancing, music, and songs, appear in no way preferable by any doctrine.

What has hitherto been said, applies only to the observations of the writer in the Calcutta Paper, for which RAM MOHUN ROY cannot be answerable; I must, however, make a few remarks on the "Introduction," as it is stated to be, to his "translation of one of the chapters of the Sama Véda." The author states that it is "a general characteristic of each Véd, that the primary chapter, of each branch treat of astronomy medicine, arms, and other arts and sciences." All the Brahmans in this part of the Peninsula are studying the same Védams as are read in the other part of the country, but I do not recollect to have read or heard of one treating on astronomy, medicine, or arms: of the first is indeed an Angan of the Vedam, but the two latter are taught in separate Sastras.

The author continues—"They also exhibit allegorical representation of the attributes of the Supreme Being by means of earthly objects," etc.; he then proceeds to state that the worship of these, as explained in the Véds, was "inculcated only for the sake of those whose limited understandings rendered them incapable **of** comprehending **and adoring**

the invisible Supreme Being." He does not appear satisfied, however, with this explanation; he seems *to* think it may not be thought sufficient to reconcile the doctrines of the two portions of the Véds, and he admits, that, if it is not, "the whole work must not only be stripped of its authority, but looked upon as altogether unintelligible/[1] To say the least of this passage, RAM MOHUN ROY appears quite as willing to abandon as to defend the Scripture of his religion : but let us examine if it be necessary to abandon them so readily.

The attributes in the preceding extract are affirmed by the Védás to be the creating, protecting, destroying, and the like powers or incarnations of the Supreme Being, Their Worship, under various representations, by means of consecrated objects, is prescribed by the scripture to the human race by way of mental exercise, who, owing to the waving nature of their minds, cannot without assistance, fix their thoughts on the incomprehensible and Almighty Being. Though the representations of the attributes are allegorical, yet the pervading nature of the Supreme Being in the attributes, in their representations, and in the objects dedicated to them, is not allegorical, and I regard the same as an ether diffused throughout ten thousand objects. If this- reaBoning be admitted, why cannot the prayer offered to the All-pervading Spirit in the dedicated object be considered as prayer to the universal and ALMIGHTY GOD ?—If one part of the ocean be adored, the whole ocean is adored.

If a person be desirous to visit an earthly prince, he ought to be introduced, in the first instance, by his ministers, but not of himself to rush in upon him at once, regardless, of offending him ; should a man wish to ascend a flight of stairs, he ought to proceed Step by step, and not to leap up several at a time, so as to endanger the wounding of his legs. In like manner the grace of GOD ought to be obtained *by* degrees, through the worship of his attributes.

I have further to observe, by way of example, that although the milk pervades the whole body of a cow, yet it is to be drawn only from the teats; so though the Supreme Being pervades all, yet his mercy is obtained through the worship of his attributes, to which a special energy is ascribed by the Scripture. The worshippers are assured by the Vedas that the particular energy inherent in the attributes will crown their wishes, provided their zeal and their faith be unaltered and steady.

The objections to worshipping the attributes are not satisfactorily stated by the author, but it seems that it is his general idea that it is not a worship directly to the Supreme Being, and that it is not prescribed in the Scriptures of certain nations. As to the last objection it is clear, however, that the worship of the attributes is not merely not rejected, but prescribed by the Scriptures of our religion ; here is the difference, and as the deliverers of the Scripture, of any religion, are not of a nature to be seen or spoken to for the purpose of proving their validity, the truth of either opinion can only be established by analogy, inference, and other modes of logic.

If the worship of the attributes be rejected, what means can be substituted to inculcate the truth and to enlighten the understanding of an indolent man, who on being told that the GOD is all-pervading and invisible, thinks him to be like the air, or the sky ; or hearing that, by a figure of speech, he is called the splendour of splendour, believes that he is of a luminous nature ? If these helps be denied him, will he not at last become ignorant of the true faith, or be induced to follow atheistical doctrines, rather than to trouble his head to attain the difficult knowledge of the divine nature ?

I have lastly to observe that, according to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, or the three persons in the Godhead, though one and united, yet are personally, or occasionally, distinguished, and prayers offered to the Godhead are con-

cluded by the words "through Jesus Christ our Saviour." I believe, though I may be mistaken, that the Saviour should be considered a personification of the mercy and kindness of GOD (I mean actual, not allegorical, pesonification; pure allegory I leave to. RAM. MOHUN ROV)—if this be so, is not mercy an attribute of Goo? Is not the prayer offered to him, through his attribute, of the same nature as the worship of the Hindus? Do not the votaries of the Christian religion, like the Hindus, acknowledge him to be essentially united to the Godhead, though occasionally separate, and do they not believe that they are certain of obtaining salvation in this faith?

For these reasons, why cannot the Hindu worship of the attributes, which are affirmed to be essentially united, but occasionally separate from the Godhead, be admitted, and why may not this be the means of obtaining *moscham* or salvation? It seems upon the whole that technical terms, modes of worship, and external rights, respectively observed, constitute an apparent difference between the religions of the earth, though in truth there be none.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
B. SENKARA SASTRI,
Head English Master in the
College of Fort St. George.

Madras, 26th December 1816.

A DEFENCE
OF
HINDOO THEISM.

BEFORE I attempt to reply to the observations that the learned gentleman, who signs himself Senkara Sastri, has offered in his letter of the 20th December last, addressed to the Editor of the " Madras Courier," on the subject of an article published in the " Calcutta Gazette," and on my translation of an "Abridgment of the Védánta" and of the two chapters of the Vedas ; I beg to be allowed to express the disappointment I have felt, in receiving from a learned Brahman controversial remarks on Hindoo Theology, written in a foreign language; as it is the invariable practice of the natives of all provinces of Hindoostan to hold their discussions on such subjects in Sangscrit, which is the learned language common to all of them, and in which they may naturally be expected to convey their ideas with perfect correctness, and greater facility than in any foreign tongue : nor need it be alleged that, by adopting this established channel of controversy, the opportunity of appealing to public opinion on the subject must be lost; as a subsequent translation from the Sungscrit into English may sufficiently serve that purpose. The irregularity of this mode of proceeding, however, gives me room to suspect that the letter in question is the production of the pen of an English gentleman, whose liberality, *I suppose,* has induced him to attempt an apology, even for the absurd idolatry of his fellow-creatures. If this inference be correct, while I congratulate that gentleman on his progress in a knowledge of the sublime doctrines of the Védánta, I must, at the same time, take the liberty of entreating that he will, for the future, prefer consulting the original works written upon those

doctrines, to relying on the second-hand information on the subject, that may be offered him by any person whatsoever.

The learned gentleman commences by objecting to the terms *discoverer* and *reformer,* in which the Editor of the " Calcutta Gazette " was pleased to make mention of me. He states, " That people of limited understanding, not being able to comprehend the system of worshipping the invisible Being, have adopted false doctrines, and by that means confounded weak minds in remote times; but due punishment was inflicted on those heretics, and religion was very well established throughout India by the Reverend Sankaracharya and his disciples; who, however, did not pretend to *reform* or *discover* them, or assume the title of a *reformer* or *discoverer."* In none of my writings, nor in any verbal discussion, have I ever pretended to reform or to discover the doctrines of the unity of God, nor have I ever assumed the title of reformer or discoverer; so far from such an assumption, I have urged in every work that I have hitherto published, that the doctrines of the unity of God are real Hindooism, as that religion was practised by our ancestors, and as it is well-known even at the present age to many learned Brahmins : I beg to repeat a few of the passages to which I allude.

In the Introduction to the " Abridgment of the Vedanta" I have said : " In order, therefore, to vindicate my own faith and that of *our forefathers,* I have been endeavouring, for some time past, to convince my countrymen of the *true meaning of our sacred* books; and prove that my aberration deserves not the opprobrium which some unreflecting persons have been so ready to throw upon me." In another place of the same Introduction: " The present is an endeavour to render an abridgment of the same (the Vedanta) into English ; by which I expect to prove to my European friends, that the superstitious practices which deform the Hindoo religion, have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates." In the

Introduction of the Cenopanishad: " This work will, I trust, by explaining to my countrymen *the real spirit of the Hindoo scriptures, which is but the declaration of the unity of God,* tend in a great degree to correct the erroneous conceptions which have prevailed with regard to the doctrines they inculcate-; " and in the Preface of the Ishopanishad: *Many learned Brahmins* are perfectly aware of the absurdity of idol worship, and *are well informed of the nature af the pure mode of divine worship,* " A reconsideration of these passages will, I hope, convince the learned gentleman, that I never advanced any claim to the title either of a reformer, or of a discoverer of the doctrines of the unity of the Godhead. It is not at all impossible that from the perusal of the translations- above alluded to, the Editor of the " Calcutta Gazette," finding the system of idolatry into which Hindoos are now completely sunk, quite inconsistent with the real spirit of their scriptures, may have imagined that their contents had become entirely forgotten and unknown ; and that I was the first to point out the absurdity of idol worship, and to inculcate the propriety of the pure divine worship, ordained by their Vedas, their Smritis, and their Poorans. From this idea, and from finding in his intercourse with other Hindoos, that I was stigmatized by many, however unjustly, as an *innovator,* he may have been, not unnaturally, misled to apply to me the epithets of discoverer and reformer.

2ndly. The learned gentleman states: "There are an immense number of books, namely, *Vedas,* Sastras, Poorans, Agams, Tantras, Sutras, and Itihas, besides numerous commentaries, compiled by many famous theologians,, both of ancient and modem times, respecting the doctrines of the worship of the invisible Being. They are not only written in Sungscrit, but rendered into the Pracreta, Teluga, Tamol, Gujrate, Hindoostani, Marhutta, and Canari, languages, and immemorially studied by a great part of the Hindu nation,

attached to the adwaitum faith, etc." This statement of the learned gentleman, as far as it is correct, corroborates indeed my assertion with respect to the doctrines of the worship of the invisible Supreme Spirit being unanimously inculcated by all the Hindoo Sastras, and naturally leads to severe reflections on the selfishness which must actuate those Brahminical teachers who, notwithstanding the unanimous authority of the Sastras for the adoption of pure worship, yet, with the view of maintaining the title of God, which they arrogate to themselves, and of deriving pecuniary and other advantages from the numerous rites and festivals of idol worship, constantly advance and encourage idolatry to the utmost of their power. I must remark, however, that there is no translation of the Vêdás into any of the modern languages of Hindoostan with which I am acquainted, and it is for that reason that I have translated into Bengali the Vêdánta, the Cénopanishad of the Sam Véd, the Ishopanishad of the Yajur Veda, etc., with the contents of which none but the learned among my countrymen were at all acquainted.

3rdly. The learned gentleman states, that the translations of the scripture into the vulgar language are rejected by some people; and he assigns as reasons for their so doing, that "If the reader of them doubts the truth of the principles explained in the translation, the divine knowledge he acquired by them becomes a doubtful faith, and that doubt cannot be removed unless he compare them with the original work: in that case, the knowledge he lastly acquired becomes superior, and his study, in the first instance, becomes useless and the cause of repeating the same work." When a translation of a work written in a foreign tongue is made by a person at all acquainted with that language into his native tongue, and the same translation is sanctioned and approved of by many natives of the same country, who are perfectly conversant with that foreign language, the translation, I presume, may be received with confidence, as a satisfactory

intrepretation of the original Work, both by the vulgar and by men of literature.

It must not be supposed, however, that I am: inclined to assert that there is not the least room to doubt the accuracy of a translation ; because the meaning of authors, even in the original works, is very frequently dubious, especially *in*: a language like Sungscrit, every sentence of which, almost, admits of being explained in different senses. But should the possibility of errors in every translation be admitted as reason for withholding all confidence in their contents, such a. rule would shake our belief, not only in the principles explained in the translation of the Védánt into the current language, but also in all information respecting foreign history and theology obtained by means of translations: in that case, we must either learn all the languages that are spoken by the different nations in the world, to- acquire a knowledge of their histories and religions, or be content to know nothing of any country besides our own. The second reason which the learned gentleman assigns for their objection to the translation is, that " Reading the scripture in the vulgar languages is prohibited by the Poorans." I have not yet met with any texts of any Poorans which prohibit the explanation of the scriptures in the vulgar tongue; on the contrary, the Poorans allow that practice very frequently. I repeat one of these declarations from the Shiva Dhurma, quoted by the great Bughnund. "He who can interpret, according to the ratio- of the understanding of his pupils; through Sungscrit, or through the vulgar languages, or by means of the current language of the country, is entitled, spiritual father." Moreover, in every part of Hindoostan all professors of the Sungscrit language instructing beginners in the Veds, Poorans, and in other Sastras, interpret them in the vulgar languages; especially spiritual fathers in exposition of those parts of the Veds and Poorans, which aUegorkally introduce a plurality of gods and idol-worship ;

doctrines which tend so much to their Own worldly advantage.

The learned gentleman states* that " The first of the Veda prescribes the mode of performing *yagam* or sacrifice, bestowing *danum* or alms ; treats of penance, fasting, and of worshipping the incarnations, in which the Supreme Deity has appeared on the earth for divine purposes. The ceremonies performed according to these modes, forsaking their fruits, are affirmed by the Védás to be mental exercises and mental purifications necessary to obtain the knowledge of the divine nature." I, in common with the Vedas and the Vedant, and Munoo (the first and best of Hindoo *lawgivers)* as well as with the most celebrated Sankaracharya, deny these ceremonies being necessary to obtain the knowledge of the divine nature; as the Véddnt positively declares, in Text 36, Sec. 4th, Chap. 3rd : " Man may acquire the true knowledge of God, even without observing the rules and rites prescribed by the Ved for each class ; as it is found in the Ved that many persons who neglected the performance of the rites and ceremonies, owing to their perpetual attention to the adoration of the Supreme Being, acquired the true knowledge respecting the Supreme Spirit." The Ved says : " Many learned true believers never worshipped fire, or any celestial gods through fire." And also the Vedant asserts, in the 1st Text of 3rd Sec. of the 3rd Chap. : "The worship authorized by all the Veds is one, as the directions for the worship of the only Supreme Being are invariably found in the Ved, and the epithets of the Supreme and Omnipresent Being, etc., commonly imply God alone." Munoo, as I have elsewhere quoted, thus declares on the same point, Chap. 12th, Text 92nd: "Thus must the chief of the twice-born, though he neglect the ceremonial rites mentioned in the Sastra, be diligent in attaining a knowledge of God, in controlling his organs of sense, and in repeating the *Ved."* Again, Chapter 4th, Text 23rd; " Some constantly sacrifice their breath in their speech, *when they*

instruct others of God aloud, and their speech in their breath *when they meditate in silence;* perceiving in their speech and breath thus employed, the imperishable fruit of a sacrificial offering." 24th : "Other Brahmans incessantly perform these sacrifices only; seeing with the eye of divine learning, that the spiritual knowledge is the root of every ceremonial observance." And also the same author declares in the Chap, 2nd, Text 84 : "All rites ordained in the Véd, oblations to fire and solemn sacrifices, pass away ; but that which passes not away is declared to be the syllable Om, thence called Acshora since it is a symbol of God, the Lord of created beings."

5thly. The learned gentleman states, that " The difficulty of attaining a knowledge of the Invisible and Almighty Spirit is evident from the preceding verses." I agree with him in that point; that the attainment of perfect knowledge of the nature of the Godhead is certainly difficult, or rather impossible ; but to read the existence of the Almighty Being in his works of nature, is not, I will dare to say, so difficult to the mind of a man possessed of common sense, and unfettered by prejudice, as to conceive artificial images to be possessed, at once, of the .opposite natures of human and divine beings, which idolaters constantly ascribe to their idols; strangely believing that things so *constructed* can be converted by ceremonies into *constructors* of the universe.

6thly. The learned gentleman objects to our introducing songs, although expressing only the peculiar tenets of monotheism, and says :

" But the holding of meetings, playing music, singing songs, and dancing, which are ranked, among carnal pleasures, **are** not ordained by scripture as mental purification." The practice of dancing in divine worship, I agree, is not ordained by the scripture, and accordingly never was introduced in our **worship** ; **any** mention of dancing in the *Calcutta Gazette* **must, therefore, have** proceeded from misinformation **of the**

Editor. But respecting the propriety of introducing monotheistical songs in the divine worship, I beg leave to refer the gentleman to the Text 114th and 115th of the 3rd Chapter of Yajnyavalca, who authorizes not only scriptural music in divine contemplation, but also the songs that are composed by the vulgar. It is also evident that any interesting idea is calculated to make more impression upon the mind, when conveyed in musical verses, than when delivered in the form of common conversation.

7thly. The learned gentleman says : " All the Brahmins in this peninsula are studying the same Védám as are read in the other parts of the country; but I do not recollect to have read or heard of one treating on astronomy, medicine, or arms: the first is indeed an angam of the Vedam, but the two latter are taught in separate Sastras." In answer to which I beg to be allowed to refer the gentleman to the following text of the Nirvan : " The Véds, while talking of planets, botany, austere duties, arms, rites, natural consequences, and several other subjects, are purified by the inculcation of the doctrines of the Supreme Spirit." And also to the latter end of the Mahanirvana agam.

From the perusal of these texts, I trust, he will be convinced that the Véds not only treat of astronomy, medicine, and arms, but also of morality and natural philosophy, and that all arts and sciences that are treated of in other Sastras, were originally introduced by the Véds: see also Munoo Chapter 12, Verses 97 and 98. I cannot of course be expected to be answerable for Brahmans neglecting entirely the study of the scientific parts of the Véel, and putting in practice, and promulgating to the utmost of their power, that part of them which, treating of rite and festivals, is justly considered as the source of their worldly advantages and support of their alleged divinity.

8thly. I observe, that on the following statement in my Introduction to the Ce'nopunishud, *viz.*, " Should **this ex-**

planation given by the *V6d* itself, as well as by its celebrated commentators Vyas, not be allowed to reconcile those passages which are seemingly at variance with each other, as those that declare the unity of the invisible Supreme Being, with others which describe a plurality of independent visible gods, the whole work must, I am afraid, not only be stripped of its authority, but looked upon as altogether unintelligble," the learned gentleman has remarked that "To say the least of this passage, RAM MOHUN ROY appears quite as willing to abandon as to defend the Scripture of his Religion."

In the foregoing paragraph, however, I did no more than logically confine the case to two points, *viz.*, that the explanation of the Ved and of its commentators must either be admitted as sufficiently reconciling the apparent contradictions between different passages of the Ved, or must not be admitted. In the latter case, the Ved must necessarily be supposed to be inconsistent with itself, and therefore altogether unintelligible, which is directly contrary to the faith of Hindoos of every description ; consequently they must admit that those explanations do sufficiently reconcile the seeming contradictions between the chapters of the V£ds.

9thly. The learned gentleman says that "Their (the attributes and incarnations) worship under various representr-tions, by means of consecrated objects, is prescribed by the scripture to the human race, by way of mental exercises," etc. I cannot admit that the worship of these attributes under various representations, by means of consecrated objects, has been prescribed by the Ved to the HUMAN RACE ; as this kind of worship of consecrated objects is enjoined by the Sastra to those only who are incapable of raising their minds to the notion of an invisible Supreme Being. I have quoted several authorities for this assertion in my Preface to the Ishopanishad, and beg to repeat here one or two of them: "The vulgar look for their God in water; men *of*

more extended knowledge in celestial bodies; **the ignorant in** wood, bricks, and stones; but learned men in the Universal Soul." "Thus corresponding to the nature of different powers of qualities numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those *who are not possessed of sufficient understanding."* Permit me in this instance to ask, whether every Mussulman in Turkey and Arabia, from the highest to the lowest, every Protestant Christian at least of Europe, and many followers of Cabbeer and Nanuck, do worship God without the assistance of consecrated objects? If so, how can we suppose that the human race is not capable of adoring the Supreme Being without the puerile practice of having recourse to visible objects?

10thly. The learned gentleman is of opinion that the attributes of God exist distinctly from God and he compares the relation between God and these attributes to that of a king to his ministers, as he says: "If a person be desirous to visit an earthly prince, he ought to be introduced in the first instance by his ministers," etc.; and "in like manner the grace of God ought to be obtained by the grace through the worship of his attributes." This opinion, I am extremely sorry to find, is directly contrary to all the Vedant doctrines interpreted to us by the most revered Sankaracharya, which are real adwaita or non-duality; they affirm that God has no second that may be possessed of eternal existence, either of the same nature with himself or of a different nature from him, nor any second of that nature that might be called either his part or his *quality.* The 16th Text of the 2nd Section of 3rd Chap: "The *V6d* has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding." The Ve'd says; "God is real existence, wisdom and eternity." The Ve*d* very often calls the Supreme Existence by the epithets of Existent, Wise, and Eternal; and assigns as the reason for adopting such epithets, that the Ved in the first instance, speaks of God according to human idea, which views quality sepa-

rately from person, in order to facilitate our comprehension of objects. In case these attributes should be supposed, as the learned gentleman asserts, to be separate existences, it necessarily follows, that they must be either eternal or non-eternal. The former case, *viz.*, the existence of a plurality of beings imbued like God himself with the property of eternal duration, strikes immediately at the root of all the doctrines relative to the unity of the Supreme Being contained in the Vedant. By the latter sentiment, namely, that the power and attributes of God are not eternal, we are led at once into the belief that the nature of God is susceptible of change, and consequently that He is not eternal, which makes no inconsiderable step towards atheism itself. These are the obvious and dangerous consequences, resulting from the learned gentleman's doctrine, that the attributes of the Supreme Being are distinct existences. I am quite at a loss to know how these attributes of the pure and perfect Supreme Being (as the learned gentleman declares them to exist really and separately, and not fictitiously and allegorically,) can be so sensual and destitute of morality as the ,creating attribute or Brahma is said to be by the Poorans, which represent him in one instance as attempting to commit a rape upon his own daughter. The protecting attribute, or Vishnu, is in another place affirmed to have fraudulently violated the chastity of Brinda, in order to kill her husband. Shiva, the destroying attribute, is said to have had a criminal attachment to Mohini, disregarding all ideas of decency. And a thousand similar examples must be familiar to every reader of the Poorans. I should be obliged by the learned gentleman's showing how the contemplation of such circumstances, which are constantly related by the worshippers of these attributes, even in their sermons, can be instrumental towards the purification of the mind, conducive to morality, and productive of eternal beatitude. Besides, though the learned gentleman in this instance considers these attributes to be separate existences, yet in

anther place he seems to view them as parts of the Supreme Being, as he says : " If one part of the ocean be adored, the ocean is adored." I am somewhat at a loss to understand how the learned gentleman proposes to reconcile this apparent contradiction. I must observe, however, in this place, that the comparison drawn between the relation of God and those attributes, and that of a king and his ministers, is totaly inconsistent with the faith entertained by Hindoos of the present day; who, so far from considering these objects of worship as mere instruments by which they may arrive at the power of contemplating the God of nature, regard them in the light of independent gods, to each of whom, however absurdly, they-attribute almighty power, and a claim to worship, solely on his own account.

11thly. The learned gentleman is dis-satisfied with the objection mentioned in my translation to worshipping these fictitious representations and remarks, that " The objections to worshipping the attributes are not satisfactorily stated by the author." I consequently repeat the following authorities, which I hope may answer my purpose. The following are the declarations of the Ved : " He who worships any God excepting the Supreme Being, and things that he himself is distinct and inferior to that God, knows nothing, and is considered as a domestic beast of these gods." " A state even so high as that of Brahma does not afford real bliss." " Adore God alone." " None but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped ; nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man." I repeat also the following text of the Vedant: ". The declaration of the Ved, that those that worship the celestial gods are the food of such gods, is an allegorical expression, and only means, that they are comforts to the celestial gods as food to mankind ; for he who has no faith in the Supreme Being is rendered subject to these gods. The Ved affirms the same."

And the revered Sankaracharya has, frequently, declared

the state of celestial gods to be that of demons, in the Bhasya of the Ishopanishad and of others.

To these authorities a thousand others might be added. But should the learned gentleman require some practical grounds for objecting to the idolatrous worship of the Hindoos, I can be at no loss to give him numberless instances, where the ceremonies that have been instituted under the pretext of honouring the all-perfect Author of Nature, are of a tendency utterly subversive of every moral principle.

I begin with Krishna as the most adored of the incarnations, the number of whose devotees is exceedingly great. His worship is made to consist in the institution of his image or picture, accompanied by one or more females, and in the contemplation of his history and behaviour, such as his perpetration of murder upon a female of the name of Pootna; his compelling great number of married and unmarried women to stand before him denuded; his debauching them and several others, to the mortal affliction of their husbands and relations ; his annoying them, by violating the laws of cleanliness and other facts of the same nature. The grossness of his worship does not find a limit here. His devotees very often personify (in the same manner as European actors upon stages do) him and his female companions, dancing with indecent gestures, and singing songs relative to his love and debaucheries. It is impossible to explain in language fit to meet the public eye, the mode in which Muhadeva, or the destroying attribute, is worshipped by the generality of the Hindoos : suffice it to say, that it is altogether congenial with the indecent nature of the image, under whose form he is most commonly adored.

The stories respecting him, which are read by his devotees in **the** Tuntras, are of a nature that, if told of any man, **would be** offensive to the ears of the most abandoned **of either** sex. **In the** worship of Kali, **human** sacrifices, **the use of wine, criminal intercourse, and licentious songs are**

included: the first of these practices has become generally extinct; but it is believed that there are parts of the country where human victims are still offered.

Debauchery, however universally forms the principal part of the worship of her followers. Nigam and other Tantras may satisfy every reader of the horrible tenets of the worshippers of the two latter deities. The modes of worship of almost all the inferior deities are pretty much the same. Having so far explained the nature of worship adopted by Hindoos in general, for the propitiation of their allegorical attributes, in direct opposition to the mode of pure divine worship inculcated by the Veds, I cannot but entertain a strong hope that the learned gentleman, who ranks even monotheistical songs among carnal pleasures, and consequently rejects their admittance in worship, will no longer stand forward as an advocate for the worship of separate and independent attributes and incarnations.

I2thly. The learned gentleman says, " That the Saviour," meaning Christ, " should be considered a personification of the mercy and kindness of God (I mean actual, not allegorical, personification) . " From the little knowledge I had acquired of the tenets of Christians and those of anti-Christians, I thought there were only three prevailing opinions respecting the nature of Christ, *viz.*, that he was considered by some as the expounder of the laws of God, and the mediator between God and man; by many to be one of the three mysterious persons of the Godhead ; whilst others, such as the Jews; say that he was a mere man. But to consider Christ as a personification of the mercy of God is, if I mistake not, a new doctrine in Christanity, the discussion of which, however, has no connexion with the present subject, I, however, must observe that this opinion, which the learned gentleman has formed of Christ being a personification of the mercy of God, is similar to that entertained by Mussulmans, for a period of upwards of a thousand years, respecting Mohummud, **whom**

they call mercy of God upon all his creatures, The learned gentleman, in the conclusion of his observations, has left, as he says, the doctrines of pure allegory to me. It would have been more consistent with justice had he left pure allegory also to the Veds, which declare, " appellations and figures of all kinds are innovations," and which have allegorically represented God in the figure of the universe : " Fire is his head, the sun and the moon are his two eyes," etc.; and which have also represented all human internal qualities by different earthly objects; and also to Vyas, who has strictly followed the Veds in these figurative representations, and to Sankara-charya, who also adopted the mode of allegory in his Bhashya of the Vedant and of the Upanishads,

A

SECOND DEFENCE

OF

THE MONOTHEISTICAL SYSTEM

OF

THE VEDS;

IN REPLY TO

AN APOLOGY FOR THE PRESENT STATE

OF

HINDOO WORSHIP.

CALCUTTA:

1917.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Two publications only have yet appeared with the professed object of defending Hindoo idolatry against the arguments which I have adduced from the Vedanta and jpther sacred authorities, in proof of the erroneousness of that system. To the first, which appeared in a Madras journal, my reply has been for some time before the public. The second, which is the object of the present answer, and is supposed to be the production of a learned Brahmun now residing in Calcutta, was printed both in Bengali and in English; and I have therefore been under the necessity of preparing a reply in both of those languages. That which was intended for the perusal of my countrymen, issued from the press a week ago.. For my European readers I have thought it advisable to make some additional remarks to those contained in the Bengali publication, which I hope will tend to make my arguments more clear and intelligible *to* them than a bare translation would do.

A

SECOND DEFENCE,

&c. &c.

THE learned Brahmun, in his defence of idolatry, thus begins : "Let it not be supposed that the following treatise has been written with a view to refute the doctrines of those assuming inventors and self-interested moderns," etc. "It is solely with the intention of expressing the true meaning of these authorities that this brief treatise has been composed ;" and he thus concludes: "The Vedant chundrica, or lunar light of the Vedant, has thus been made apparent, and thus the glowworm's light has been eclipsed." It is very much to be feared that, from the perusal of this treatise, called the lunar light of the Vedant, but filled up with* satirical fables,† abusive expressions, and contradictory assertions, sometimes admitting monotheism, but at the same time blending with it and defending polytheism,‡ those foreign gentlemen, as well as those natives of this country who are not acquainted with the real tenets of the Vedant might on a superficial view form a very unfavourable opinion of that theology, which, however, treats with perfect consistency of the unity and universality of the Supreme Being, and forbids, positively, treating with contempt or behaving ill towards any creature whatsoever.

As to the satire§ and abuse, neither my education permits any return by means of similiar language, nor does the

* P. I, 1. 26 ; P. 2, I. 17 ; p. 19 and 20, margin,

† P. I; p. 3. 1. 9 1 P. 8.1. 17 ; p. 38, l. 14; P. 48,1. I9, etc. etc.

‡ P. 13. l. 14.

§ *Vide* the "Apology," passim.

system of my religion admit even a desire of unbecoming retaliation : situated as I am, I must *bear them tranquilly.*

Besides, a sect of people who are apt to make use of the most foul language, when they feel angry with their supposed deities,* cannot of course be expected, when irritated with contradiction, *to* pay due attention, unless checked by fear, to the propriety of the use of decent expressions, either in common conversation or in religious controversy.

The total sum of the arguments, set forth as far" as page 13, of the translation of this treatise (however inconsistent they are with each other), seems' intended to prove that faith in the Suprerrfe Being, when united with moral works, leads men to eternal happiness.

This doctrine, I am happy to* observe, strongly corroborates every assertion that I have made in my translation; a few paragraphs of which I beg leave to repeat here for the Satisfaction of my readers. In the Abridgment of the Vedant, page 5 : " The Vedant shews that moral principle is a part of the adoration of God, viz.,, a command over passions and over the external senses of the body, and good acts are declared by the Ved to be indispensable in the mind's approximation to God ; they should therefore be* strictly taken care of, [and attended to, both previously and subsequently to such approximation to the Supreme Being; that is to say, we should not indulge our evil propensities, but should endeavour to have entire control over them ; reliance on, and self-resignation to the only true Being, with an aversion to worldly considerations, are included in the good acts above alluded to." In the Introduction to the *Ishopanishad* (page 87): "Under these impressions, therefore, I have been impelled

* As may be observed when at the annual festival of Jugunnath, the car in which he is conveyed happens to be impeded in its progress by any unseen obstacle. In this case, the difficulty is supposed to be occasioned by the malicious opposition of that god, on whom the most gross abuse is liberally bestowed by his devotees.

to lay before them genuine translations of parts of their scriptures, which inculcate not only the enlightened worship of One God, but the purest principles of morality." But the learned Brahman asserts, in two instances, among arguments above noticed, that the worship of a favoured deity and that of an image are also considered to be acts of morality. The absurdity of this assertion will be shown afterwards, in considering the subjects of idol-worship, To English readers, however, it may be proper to remark, that the Sungscrit word which signifies *works,* is not to be understood in the same Sense as that which it implies in Christian theology, when works are opposed to faith. Christians understand, by works, actions of *moral merit,* wherea Hindoos use the term in their jjieology only to denote religious rites and ceremonies prescribed by Hindoo lawgivers, which are often irreconcilable with the commonly received maxims of moral duty ; as, for instance, the crime of suicide prescribed to widows by Ungeera, and to pilgrims at holy places by the Nursingh and Koorma Poorans, I do not, therefore, admit that works, taken in the latter sense (that is, the different religious acts prescribed by the Sastra to the different classes of Hindoos respectively) are necessary to attain divine faith, or that they are indispensable accompaniments of holy knowledge ; for the Vedant in the Chapter 3rd, Section 4th, Text 37th, positively declares that the true knowledge of God may be acquired without observing the rules and rites prescribed by the Sastra to each class of Hindoos ; and also, examples are frequently found in the Ved, of persons, who, though they neglected the performance of religious rites and ceremonies, attained divine knowledge and absorption by control over their passions and senses, and by contemplation of the Ruler of the universe. Menu, the first and chief of all Hindoo lawgivers, confirms the same doctrines in describing the duties of laymen, in the Texts 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of the 4th Chapter of his Work; **and** in the Bhashya, or Commentaries on the Ishopanishad;

and on the other Upanishads of the Veds, the illustrious Sankaracharjya declared the attainment of faith in God, and the adoration of the Supreme Being, to be entirely independent of Brahmanical ceremonies ; and the Ved affirms that " many learned true believers never worshipped fire, nor any celestial god through fire." The learned Brahmun, although he has acknowledged himself, in p. 9th, line 6th, of his treatise, that, " in the opinion of Sankaracharjya the attaiment of absorption does not depend on works of merit" (or, properly speaking, on religious rites), yet forgetting the obedience he has expressed to be due to the instruction* of that celebrated commentator, has immediately contradicted his opinion, when he says in p. 9. 1. 9 :" It has also been ascertained that acts of merit (Brahminical rites) must be performed previously to the attainment of divine knowledge ; " for, if divine knowledge were to be dependent on the observance of Barhminical rites, absorption dependent on divine knowledge, it would follow necessarily that absorption would depend on Brahminical rites, which is directly contrary to the opinion of the commentator quoted by the learned Brahmun himself.

Moreover, the learned Brahmun at first states (p. 11, 1. 12) that " in the ancient writers we read that a knowledge of Brahm, or holy knowledge, is independent of acts " (religious rites) ; but he again contradicts this statement, and endeavours to explain it away (p. 11, 1. 24) : "Thus when the Sastras state that absorption may be attained even though the sacrificial fires be neglected, the praise of that holy knowledge is intended, but *not* the depreciation of meritorious acts" (Brahminical rites). Here he chooses to accuse scripture, and ancient holy writers, of exaggerated and extravagant praise of holy knowledge, rather than that the least shock should be given by their authority to the structure of paganism and idolatry. From this instance, the public may

* P. 3, I. 14.

perceive how zealous the learned Brahmun and his brethren are, in respect to the preservation of their fertile estate of idolatry, when they are willing to sacrifice to it even their own scriptural authorities.

Upon a full perusal of the treatise, it appears that the arguments employed by the learned Brahmun have no other object than to support the weak system of idol-worship; inasmuch as he repeatedly declares, that the adoration of 330,000,000 deities, especially the principal ones, such as Siva, Vishnu, Kali, Gunesh, the Sun and others, through their several images, has been enjoined by the Sastras, and sanctioned by custom. I am not a little surprised to observe, that after having perused my Preface to the *Ishopanishad* in Bengali (of which during the last twelve months I have distributed nearly live hundred copies amongst all descriptions of Hindoos), the learned Brahmun has offered no objection to what I have therein asserted, relative to the reason assigned by the same Sastras, as well as for the injunction to worship these figured beings, as for the general prevalence of idol-worship in this country.

In that work, I admitted that the worship of these deities was directed by the Sastra ; but, at the same time, I proved by their own authority, that this, was merely a concession made to the limited faculties of the vulgar, with the view of remedying, in some degree, the misfortune of their being incapable of comprehending and adopting the spiritual worship of the true God. Thus, in the aforesaid Preface, I remarked : " For they (the Poorans, Tantras, etc.,) repeatedly declare God to be one, and above the apprehension of the external and internal senses. They indeed expressly declare the divinity of many gods, and the mode of their worship; but they reconcile those contradicting assertions by affirming frequently, that the directions to worship any celestial beings are only applicable to those who are incapable of elevating their minds to the idea of an invisible

being." And, with the view to remove .every* doubt as to the correctness of my assertion, I at the same time quoted the most unquestionable authorities, a few of which I shall here repeat, " Thus corresponding to the natures of different powers and qualities, numerous figures have been invented for the benefit of those who are not possessed of sufficient understanding." " The vulgar look for their gods in water; men of more extended knowledge, in celestial bodies; the ignorant, in wood, bricks, and stones; but learned men in the Universal Soul." " It is impossible for those who consider pilgrimage as devotion, and believe that the divine nature exists in the image, to look up to, communicate with, to petition, and to serve true believers in God."

Such indeed is the prevalent nature of truth, that when to dispute it is impossible, the learned Brahmun has not been always successful in concealing it, even when the admission is most fatal to his own argument. In p. 28, 1. 34, he says : " But to those it is enjoined who, from a *defective understanding,* do not perceive that God exists in every thing, that they should worship him through the medium of some created object." In making this acknowledgment, the learned Brahmun has confirmed the correctness of all my assertions ; though the evident conclusion is, that he and all his followers must either immediately give up all pretensions to under-Standing, or forsake idolatry.

In my former tract, I not only proved that the adoration of the Supreme Being in spirit was prescribed by the Ved to men of understanding, and the worship of the celestial bodies and their images to ignorant, but I also asserted, that the Véd actually prohibited the worship of any kind of figured beings by men of intellect and education. A few of the passages quoted by me in my former publication, on which this assertion rests, I also beg leave to repeat.

" He who worships any God except the Supreme Being, and thinks that he himself is distinct and inferior to that God,

knows nothing, and is considered a domestic beast of these gods." "A state even so high as that of Brahma, does not afford real bliss." "Adore God alone. None but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped; nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man." I repeat also the following text of Vedant: "The declaration of the Ved, that those that worship the celestial gods are the food of such gods, is an allegorical expression, and only means that they are comforts to the celestial gods, as food to mankind; for he who has no faith in the Supreme Being, is rendered subject to these gods; the Véd affirms the same." No reply therefore is, I presume, required of me to the arguments adduced by the learned Brahmun in his treatise for idol-worship; except that I should offer some additional authorities, confirming exclusively the rational worship of the true God, and prohibiting the worship of the celestial figures and their images. I beg leave accordingly to quote, in the first instance, a few texts of the V6d: "Men may acquire eternal beatitude, by obtaining a knowledge of the Supreme Being alone; *there is no other way* to salvation."* "To those that acquire a knowledge of Him, the Ruler of the intellectual power, who is eternal amidst the perishable universe, and is the source of sensation among all animate existences and who alone assigns to so many objects their respective purposes, everlasting beatitude is allotted; but not to those who are not possessed of that know ledge."† And in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Texts of the C*enopanishad,* the Ved has, five times successively, denied the divinity of any specific being which men in general worship; and has affirmed the divinity of that Being solely, who is beyond description and comprehension, and out of the reach of the power of vision, and of the sense of hearing or of smelling. The most celebrated Sankaracharyá, in his commentary upon these texts, states that, lest

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*** Sooctu. † Kat'ha.**

people should suppose Vishnu, Mahadeva, Povan, Indra, or any other, to be a supreme spirit, the Véd in this passage disavows positively the divinity of all of them. Again, the Véd says: " Those that neglect the contemplation of the Supreme Spirit, *either by devoting themselves solely to the performance of the ceremonies of religion, or by living destitute of religious ideas,* shall, after death, assume the state of demons, *such as that of the celestial gods, and of other created beings,* which are surrounded with the darkness of ignorance."* It will not, I hope, be supposed inconsistent with the subject in question to mention in this place in what jnanner the Vedant treats of these celestial gods, and how the Véd classes them among the other beings. The Védánt (Ch. 1st, S. 3rd, T. 26th) has the following passage : " Vyas affirms that it is prescribed also to celestial gods and heavenly beings to attain a knowledge of the Supreme Being, because a desire of absorption is *equally* possible for them." And the Véd, in the *Moonduc Upanishad,* thus declares: " From Him who knows all things generally and particularly, and who only by his omniscience *created the universe* Brahmá, and whatever bears appellation, and figure as well as food, all are produced." " From Him (the Supreme Being) celestial gods† of many descriptions, Siddha, or beings next to celestial gods, mankind, beasts, birds, life, wheat, and barley, all are produced." In the *Debee Mahatmya,* a work which is as much in circulation among the Hindoos as their daily prayer-book, ‡ (Ch. 1st, T. 66th) the creation of Vishnu, Brahma, Mahadeva, is most distinctly affirmed.

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* **Ishopanishad.**

† **The Ved, having in the first instance personified all the attributes and powers of the Deity, and also the celestial bodies and natural elements, does, in conformity to this idea of presonification, treat of them in the subsequent passages as if they were real beings, ascribing to them birth, animation, senses, and accidents, as well as liability to annihilation.**

‡ Pooj Paul.

Munoo, the best of all the commentators of the Véds, says (Chap. 12th, Text 85th) : "Of all those duties, answered Bhrigoo, the principal is to acquire *from the Upanishad* a true knowledge of the one Supreme Spirit, that is, the most exalted of all sciences, because through that knowledge eternal beatitude is obtained." And the same author, in the conclusion of his work on rites and ceremonies, thus directs (T. 92nd, Ch. 12th) : "Thus must the chief of the twice-born, though he neglect the ceremonial rites mentioned in the Shastras, be diligent in attaining a knowledge of God, in controlling his organs of sense, and in repeating the Ved." In the *Coolarnuva,* absoq>tion is not to be affected by the studies of the Véds nor by the reading of other Shastras : absorption is affected by a true knowledge of the Supreme Being. O ! Parbutee, except that knowledge there is no other way to absorption." " Caste or religions order belonging to each sect, is not calculated to be the cause of eternal beatitude, nor is the study of Durshuns or any other Shastras, sufficient to produce absorption : a knowledge of the Supreme Spirit is alone the cause of eternal beatitude." *Mahanirvana* .* " He who believes that from the highest state of Brahma* to the lowest state of a straw, all are delusions, and that the one Supreme Spirit is the only true being, attains beatitude." " Those who believe that the divine nature exists in an image made of earth, stone, metal, wood, or of other materials, reap only distress by their austerities ; but they cannot, without a knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, acquire absorption."

I am really sorry to observe that, notwithstanding these authorities and a thousand others of a similar nature, the learned Brahmun appears altogether unimpressed by the luminous manner in which they inculcate the sublime simple spiritual belief in, and worship of, one God, and that, on the contrary, he should manifest so much zeal in leading people into an idolatrous belief in the divinity of created and perishable beings.

Idolatry, as now practised by our countrymen, and which the learned Brahmun so zealously supports as conducive to morality, is not only rejected by the Shastras universally, but must also be looked upon with great horror by common sense, as leading directly to immorality and destructive of social comforts. For every Hindoo Who devotes himself to this absurd worship, constructs for that purpose a couple of male and female idols, sometimes indecent in form, as representatives of his favourite deities; he is taught and enjoined from his infancy to contemplate and repeat the history of these, as well as of their fellow-deities, though the actions ascribed to them be only a continued series of debauchery, sensuality, falsehood, ingratitude, breach of trust, and treachery to friends.* There can be but one opinion respecting the moral conduct to be expected of a person, who has been brought up with sentiments of reverence to such beings, who refreshes his memory relative to them almost every day, and who has been persuaded to believe, that a repetition of the *holy name* of one of these deities,* or a trifling present to his image or to his devotee, is sufficient, not only to purify and free him from all crimes whatsoever, but to procure to him future beatitude.

As to the custom or practice to which the learned Brahmun so often refers in defence of idolatry, I have already, I presume, explained in the Preface of the *IshopanUshad,* the accidental circumstances which have caused idol-worship to flourish throughout the greater part of India; but, as the learned Brahmun has not condescended to notice any of my remarks on this subject, I beg leave to repeat here a part of them.

" Many learned Brahmuns are perfectly aware of the absurdity of idolatry, and are well informed of the nature of

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* *Vide* Note at the end.

the pure mode of divine worship ; but as in the rites, ceremonies, and festivals of idolatry they find the source of their comforts and fortune, they not only never fail to protect idol-worship from all attacks, but even advance and encourage it to the utmost of their power, by keeping the knowledge of their scriptures concealed from the rest of the people." And again : " It is, however, evident to every one possessed of common sense, that custom or fashion is quite different from divine faith ; the latter proceeding from spiritual authorities and correct reasoning, and the former being merely the fruit of vulgar caprice. What can justify a man, who believes in the inspiration of his religious books, in neglecting the direct authorities of the same works, and subjecting himself entirely to custom and fashion, which are liable to perpetual changes, and depend upon popular whim ? But it cannot be passed unnoticed, that those who practise idolatry, and defend it under the shield of custom, have been violating their customs almost every twenty years, for the sake of a little convenience, or to promote their worldly advantages." Instances of this sort are mentioned in the Preface of the *Ishopanishad,* and to those I beg leave to recall the attention of the learned Brahmun.

Every reader may observe, that the learned Brahmun in his treatise, written (as he says) on the doctrines of the Vedant, has generally neglected to quote any authority for his assertions ; and when he cites the Ved or the Vedant (which he does sometimes) as his authority, he carefully omits to mention the Text or part to which his assertion refers. The validity of theological controversy chiefly depends upon Scriptural authority, but when no authority is offered, the public may judge how far its credibility should extend. I shall, however, make a few remarks on the absurd and contradictory assertions with which the treatise abounds.

The learned Brahmun observes.* " But if the divine

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* P. 14,1. 14.

essence itself, and not the energy be extolled, it will be adored under the forms of Brahma, Vishnu, and Indra, and other male deities." And in other places, (p. 30, 1. 27): " So by paying adoration to any material object, animate or inanimate, the Supreme Being himself is adored." If the truth of the latter assertion be admitted (namely, that God himself is adored by the adoration of anything whatsoever), no mark of distinction between the adoration of any visible objects and male deities will exist; and the former assertion respecting the adoration of the Supreme Being through the male deities only, will appear an absurd restriction.

The learned Brahmun states (p. 19, 1. 31), that, "If *you* believe on the authority of the Scriptures, that there is a Supreme Being, can you not believe that he is united to matter?" A belief in God is by no means connected with a belief of his being united to matter : for those that have faith in the existence of the Almighty, and are endued with common sense, scruple not to confess their ignorance as to his nature or mode of existence, in regard to the point of his relation to matter, or to the properties of matter. How, therefore, can a belief in God's being united to matter, be inferred as a necessary consequence of a belief in his existence? The learned Brahmun again contradicts himself on this point, saying (p. 38, 1. 19): "The divine essence being supernatural and immaterial, a knowledge of it is to be acquired solely from revelations,"

The learned Brahmun (in p. 18, 1. 4): states that: "A quality cannot exist independently of its substance, but substance may exist independently of any quality." Every one possessed of sensation is convinced, that a substance is as much dependent on the possession of some quality or qualities for its existence, as a quality on some substance. It is impossible even to imagine a substance divested of qualities. Despoil it as much as you please, that of magnitude must still remain. I therefore trust that the public will not suppose

the above stated doctrines of the learned Brahmun to have been derived from those of the Védánt.

It is again stated (p. 21, 1. 4), that, "In point of fact, if you admit the existence of matter, as far as it regards yourself, with its twenty-four accidents, as confirmed by universal experience, you can easily conceive that the same properties belong to the Supreme Being/' It is easy enough for the learned Brahmun to conceive that the twenty-four properties which are peculiar to animals, and among whidh all sources of carnal pleasures are included, belong to his supposed deities; but it is difficult, or rather impossible, for a man untainted with idolatrous principles, to ascribe to God all such properties as he allows to exist in himself.

The learned Brahmun has drawn an analogy between the operation of the charms of the Véds, and that of magic; whereon he says (p. 18, 1. 1): "Cannot the charms of the Veds operate as powerfully as those of magic, in producing effects where the cause is not present?" If the foundation of the Véds is held not to be stronger, as the learned Brahmun seems to consider it, than that of magic, I am afraid it will be found to rest on so slender a footing, that its doctrines will hardly be worth discussion.

In p. 24, 1. 10, the learned Brahmun states that "The Vedant itself, in treating of the several deities, declares them to be possessed of forms, and their actions and enjoyments are all dependent on their corporeal nature." But (p. 21, 1. 19) he says: "Because the male and female deities, whose being I contend for, are nothing more than accidents existing in the Supreme Being."

He thus at one time considers these deities as possessed of a corporeal nature, and at another declares them to be mere accidents in God; which is quite inconsistent with the attribute of corporeality, I am really at a loss to understand, how the learned Brahmun could admit so dark a contradiction into his "*Lunar light of the Vedant.*"

The learned Brahmun (in. p. 27, 1. 6) thus assimilates the worship of the Supreme Being to that of an earthly king, saying: " Let us drop the discourse concerning a Supreme and Invisible Being; take an earthly king. It is evident that, to serve him, there must be the medium of materiality. Can service to him be accomplished otherwise than by attendance on his person, praising his qualities, or some similar method ?" Those who believe God to be an almighty, omniscient, and independent existence, which, pervading the universe, is deficient in nothing ; and also know the feeble and dependent nature of earthly kings, as liable to sudden ruin, as harassed by incessant cares and wants, ought never, I presume, to assimilate the contemplation of the Almighty power with any corporeal service acceptable to an earthly king. But as by means of this analogy, the learned Brahmun and his brethren have successfully persuaded their followers to 'make, in imitation of presents and bribes offered to princes, pecuniary vows to these supposed deities, to which it would seem none but the learned Brahmun and his brethren have exclusive claim,—and as such analogy has thus become the source of their comforts and livelihood, I shall say no more upon so tender a subject.

He further observes (in p. *22,* 1. 27) : " In reverting to the subject, you affirm, that you admit the existence of matter in human beings, because it is evident to your senses ; but deny it with respect to God, because it is not evident to your* senses/' etc. ; and, " If this be your method of reasoning, it would appear that your faith is confined to those objects only which are evident to your senses." As far as my recollection goes with respect to the contents of my publications, both in the native language and in English, I believe I never denied the materiality of God, on the mere ground of its not being evident to our senses. The assertion which I quoted, or made use of in my former treatise, is, that the nature of the Godhead is beyond the comprehension of

external and internal senses;* which, I presume, implies neither the denial of the materiality of God, on the sole ground of his being invisible, nor the limitation of my faith merely to objects evident to the senses. For many things that far surpass the limits of our senses to perceive, or experience to teach, may yet be rendered credible, or even demonstrated by inferences drawn from our experience. Such as the mutual gravitation of the earth and moon towards each other, and of both to the sun; which facts cannot be perceived by any of our senses, but may be clearly demonstrated by reasoning drawn from our experience. Hence it appears, that a thing is justly denied, only, when found contrary to sense and reason, and not merely because it is not perceptible to the senses.

I have now to notice the friendly advice given me by the learned Brahmun (in p. *22*, 1, 16). "But at all events, divest yourself of the uneasy sensations you profess to experience, at witnessing the worship paid to idols, prepared at the expense and labour of another." In thanking him for his trouble in offering me this counsel, I must, however, beg the learned Brahmun to excuse me, while I acknowledge myself unable to follow it; and that for several reasons. 1st. A feeling for the misery and distress of his fellow-creatures is, to every one not overpowered by selfish motives, I presume, rather natural than optional. 2ndly. I, as one of their countrymen, and ranked in the most religious sect, of course participate in the disgrace and ridicule to which they have subjected themselves, in defiance of their scriptural authority, by the worship of idols, very often under the most shameful forms, accompanied with the foulest language, and most indecent hymns and gestures. 3rdly. A sense of the duty which one man owes to another, compels me to exert my utmost endeavours to

* The Prefaoe to the Ishopanishad, p. 2, 1. 2; p. 2, 1. 23. The Abridgment of the Vedant, p. 1 and 2.

rescue them from imposition and servitude, and promote their comfort and happiness.

He further observes (p. 30, 1, 19): " In the like manner, the King of Kings is served equally by those worshippers who are acquainted with His real essence, and by those who only recognize Him under the forms of the deities; but in the future distribution of rewards a distinction will be made." As the learned Brahmun confesses, that the same reward is not promised to the worshippers of figured deities as to the adorers of the Supreme Being, it seems strange that he should persist in alleging that God is truly worshipped in the adoration of figured gods ; for if the worship be in both cases the same, the reward bestowed by a just God must be the same to both; but the rewards are not the same to both, and therefore the worship of figured deities cannot be considered equal to the adoration of God.

In the same page (1. 7), he compares God to a mighty emperor; saying, " As a mighty emperor travels through his kingdom in the garb of a peasant, to effect the welfare of his subjects, so the King of Kings pervades the universe, assuming a divine, or even a human form, for the same benevolent purpose." This comparison seems extremely objectionable, and the inference from it totally inadmissiable. For a king being ignorant of things out of the reach of his sight, and liable to be deceived respecting the secrets and private opinions of his subjects, may sometimes be obliged to travel through his kingdom, to acquire a knowledge of their condition, and to promote their welfare personally. But there can be obviously no inducement for an omnipotent being, in whose omniscience also the learned Brahmun, I dare say, believes, to assume a form in order either to acquaint himself with the affairs of men, or to accomplish any benevolent design towards his creatures.

He again observes, that these figures and idols are representations of the true God, a sight of which serves, as he

alleges, to bring to that Being to his recollection (p. 30,1. 5): "They are as pictures, which recall to the memory a dear and absent friend, or like the worship of the moon, reflected in various waters."

The observation of the learned Brahmun, induces me to suppose that he must have formed a notion of the Godhead quite strange and contemptible: for it is almost impossible for a man, who has a becoming a idea of God's superiority to al! creatures, to represent Him, as the Hindoos very often do, in a form so shameful, that a description of it is prohibited by common decency, or in a shape so ridiculous, as that piebald kite called Kshyemunkuree, and that of another bird called Neelkunth, or of jackals, etc. And it is equally difficult to believe that a rational being can make use of such objects to bring the All-perfect Almighty Power to his recollection.

He further says (p. 31, 1. 32): "If any one assert that the case is otherwise, that the deities, mankind, the heavens, and other objects, have an existence independent of God, that faith in him is sufficient without worship, that they (the deities) cannot meet with reverence, how can that person affect to disbelieve the doctrine of independent existence, or assert that he is a believer in universality, or a follower of the Vedant?" To acquit myself from such gross but unfounded accusation as that of my believe ing material existence to be independent of God, I repeat a few passages from the Abridgment of the Vedant, (P. 6. I. 8) "Nothing bears true existence excepting God." Again in 1. 9, "The existence of whatever thing that appears to us, relies on the existence of God." Besides, there is not, I am confident, a single assertion in the whole of my publications, from which the learned Brahmun might justly infer that I believed in the independent existence of deities, mankind, the heavens, or other objects. The public, by an examination of these works, will be enabled to judge how far the learned Brahmun has ventured to brave public

opinion, in the invention of arguments for the defence of idolatry.

He again says (p. 34, l. 28): "If, by the practice of the prescribed forms in a church, a temple, or a mosque, God be worshipped, how can he be dishonoured by being worshipped under the form of an image, however manufactured?" Those who contemplate God in a church or mosque, or elevate their minds to a notion of the Almighty Power in any other appropriated place, for the sake of good example, never pay divine homage to these places; but those that pretend to worship God under the form of an image, consider it to be possessed of divine nature, and at the same time, most inconsistently, as imbued with immoral principles. Moreover, the promoters of the worship of images, by promulgating anecdotes illustrative of the supposed divine power of particular idols, endeavour to excite the reverence of the people, and specially of pilgrims; who, under these superstitious ideas, are persuaded to propitiate them with large sacrifices of money, and sometimes even by that of their own lives. Having so far entered into this subject, the learned Brahmun will, I hope, be convinced of the impropriety of the analogy which he has drawn between a worship *within* a certain material object and a worship *of* a material object.

As to his question (p. 34, l. 32), "Is the sight of the image unpleasing?" My answer must be affirmative. It is extremely natural that, to a mind whose purity is not corrupted by a degrading superstition, the sight of images which are often of the most hideous or indecent description, and which must therefore excite disgust in the minds of the spectator, should be unpleasing. A visit to Calighaut,* or Barahnagur,† which are only four miles distant from Calcutta,

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* The temple of Kali.

† Where there are twelve temples dedicated to Siva.

Will sufficiently convince the reader of the unpleasant nature of their beloved images. He again asks in the same page, (1. 33) : " Will a beloved friend be treated with disrespect by beirtg seated on a chair, when he arrives in your house, or by being presented with fragrant flowers and other offerings ?" To which I shall say, no; but at the same time I must assert that a friend worthy of reverence would not, we may be sure, be at all pleased at being exhibited sometimes in a form,* the bare mention of which would be considered as a gross insult to the decorous feelings of the public ; and sometimes in the shape of a monkey,† fish,‡ hog,§ or elephant,|| or at being represented as destitute of every virtue, and altogether abandoned. Nor would be believe his host to be possessed of common sense, who, as a token of regard, would altogether neglect his guest, to go and lay fruits and flowers before his picture.

It is said (p. 39, 1. 23) : " In the accounts of ancient Greece we meet with the worship of idols, and the practice of austerities ; but these acts have been contemned by the more enlightened moderns." I am really glad to observe that the learned Brahmun, more liberally and plainly than could be expected, confesses that idolatry will be totally contemned as soon as the understanding is improved. I, however, beg leave to remark on this instance, that though the idolatry practised by the Greeks and Romans was certainly just as impure, absurd, and puerile as that of the present Hindoos, yet the former was by no means so destructive of the comforts of life, or injurious to the texture of society, as the latter. The present Hindoo idolatry being made to consist in following certain modes and restraints of diet (which according to the authorities of the Mahabharut and other

* Under which Siva is adored. † Hunooman.
‡ The first incarnation of Vishnu,
§ The third incarnation of Ditto. || Gunesh,

histories were never observed by their forefathers), has subjected its unfortunate votaries to entire separation from the rest of the world, and also from each- other, and to constant inconveniences and distress;

A Hindoo, for instance, who affects particular purity,* cannot even partake of food dressed by his own brother, when invited to his house, and if touched by him while eating, he must throw away the remaining part of his meal. In fact, owing to the observance of such peculiar idolatry,, directly contrary to the authorities of their scripture, they hardly deserve the name of social beings.

The learned Brahmun further says (p. 23, 1. 3) : " If you affirm that you are not an infidel, but that your arguments are in conformity with those of the philosophers who were ignorant of the Veds," etc. A remark of this kind cannot, I am sure, be considered as at all applicable to a person, who has subjected himself to this writer's remarks only by translating and publishing the principal parts of the Ved, and by vindicating the Vedant theology ; and who never advanced on religious controversy any argument which was not founded upon the authorities of the Veds and their celebrated commentators. It is, however, remarkable that, although the learned Brahmun and his brethern frequently quote the name of the Veds and other Shastras, both in writting and in verbal discussion, they pay little or no attention in practice to their precepts, even in the points of the most important nature, a few of which I beg leave to notice here, Ist. The adoration of the invisible Supreme Being, although exclusively presxribed by the Upanishads, or the principal parts of the Veds, and also by the Vedant, has been totally neglected, and even discountenanced, by the learned Brahmun and his followers; the idol-worship, which those

* A person of this description is distinguished by the name of Swayungpak, one who is his own cook.

authorities permit only to the ignorant, having been substituted for that pure worship,

2ndiy. Ungeera and Vishnu, and also the modern Rughoonundun, authorize a widow to burn herself voluntarily along with the corpse of her husband: but modern Brahmuns, in direct opposition to their authority, allow her relations to bind the mournful and infatuated widow *to* the funeral pile with ropes and bamboos, as soon as she has expressed a wish to perform the dreadful funeral sacrifice, to which the Brahumuns lend a ready assistance.

3rdly. Although the acceptance of money or of a present in the marriage contract of a daughter is most strictly prohibited by the Véds and by Munoo (Text 98 and 100 of Chap, 9), yet the sale of female children under pretence of marriage is practised by nearly two-thirds of the Brahmuns of Bengal and Tirhoot, as well as by their followers generally.

4thly. Yagnyubulkya has authorized the second marriage of a man, while his former wife is living; but only under certain circumstances of misconduct or misfortune in the latter, such as the vice of drinking wine, of deception, of extravagance, of using disagreeable language, or shewing manifest dislike towards her husband; long protracted and incurable illness, barrenmess, or producting only female offspring. In defiance, however, of this restraint, some of them marry thirty or forty women, either for the sake of money got with them at marriage, or to gratify brutal inclinations, Madhosingh, the late Rajah of Tirhoot, through; compassion towards that helpless sex, limited, I am told, within these thirty or forty years, the Brahmuns of that district to four wives only. This regulation, although falling short both of the written law and of that of reason, tends to alleviate in some measure the misery to which women were before exposed, as well as to diminish in some degree domestic strife and disturbance.

5thly. According to the authority of Munoo (Text 155,

Chap. 2nd), respect and distinction are due to a Brahmun, merely in proportion of his knowledge ; but on the contrary amongst modern Hindoos, honour is paid exclusively to certain families of Brahmuns, such as the Koolins, etc., however void of knowledge and principal they may. be This departure from law and justice was made by the authority of a native prince of Bengal, named Bullalsen, within the last three or four hundred years, And this innovation may perhaps be considered as the chief source of that decay of learning and virtue, which, I am sorry to say, may be at present observed. For wherever respectability is confined to birth only, acquisition of knowledge, and the practice of morality, in that country, must rapidly decline.

The learned Brahmun objects to the term *indescribable,* although universally assigned to the Supreme Being by the Ved, and by the Vedant theology, saying (p. 37, l. 20), " It is a wonderful interpretation of the Vedant to say that God is indescribable, although existing, unless indeed he be looked upon as the production of magic; as existing in one sense, and non-existent in another." And again (1. 14), " He, therefore, who asserts that the Supreme Being is indescribable and at the same time existing, must conceive that He, like the world, is mutable," etc. In answer to which I beg to refer the learned Brahmun to the 11th Text of the third Brahmun of the 4th Chapter of the Brehadarunyuc, the principal part of the Ujoor Véd, as commented upon by the celebrated Sunkaracharyya : " The Ved having so far described God, by various absolute* and relative epithets,† was convinced of its incapability of giving a real description of the nature of the Godhead: language can convey a notion of things only either by the appellations by which they are already known, or by describing their figure, accidents, genus, and properties ; but God has none of these physical circumstances: the

* As eternal, true, and intelligent.

† As creator, preserver, and destroyer.

Ved therefore attempted to explain him in negative terms;" {that is, by declaring that whatever thing may be perceived by the mental faculties, or the external senses, is not God.) The Ved's ascribing to God attributes of eternity, wisdom, truth, etc., shews that it can explain him only by ascribing those attributes, and applying those epithets, that are held by man in the highest estimation, without intending to assert the adequacy of such description. He is the only true existence amidst all dependent existences, and the true source of our senses." Also in the Text 3rd. of the Cenopanishad: " Hence no vision can approach him ; no language can describe him; no intellectual power can compass or determine him. We know nothing of how the Supreme Being should be explained: He is beyond nature, which is above comprehension : our ancient *spiritual parents* have thus explained Him to us." It cannot, however, be inferred from our acknowledged ignorance of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, that we are equally ignorant as to His existence. The wonderful structure and growth of even so trifling an object as a leaf of a tree, affords proof of an Almighty Superintend ,dent of the universe; and even the physical world affords numerous instances of things whose existence is quite evident to our senses, but of whose nature we can form no conception ; such as the causes of the sensations of heat and vision.

The learned Brahmun attempts to prove the impossibility of an adoration of the Deity, saying (p. 33, 1. 15): "That which cannot be conceived, cannot be worshipped." Should the learned Brahmun consider a full conception of the nature, essence, or qualities of the Supreme Being, or a physical picture truly representing the Almighty power, with offerings of flowers, leaves, and viands, as essential to adoration, I agree with the learned Brahmun with respect to the impossibility of the worship of God. But, should adoration imply only the elevation of the mind to the conviction of the existence of the Omnipresent Deity, as testified by His wise and

wonderful works, 'and continual contemplation of His power as so displayed ; together with a constant sense of the gratitude which we naturally owe Him, for our existence, sensation, and comfort,—I never will hesitate to assert, that His adoration is not only possible, and practicable, but even incumbent upon every rational creature. For further explanation, I refer the learned Brahmun to the Text 47, Sect. 4, Chap. 3, of the Vedant.

To his question,* " What are you yourselves ? " I suppose I may safely reply for myself, that I am a poor dependent creature:—subject, in common with others, to momentary changes, and liable to sudden destruction.

At p. 45, l. 30, the learned Brahmun, if I rightly understand his object, means to insinuate, that I have adopted the doctrines of those who deny the responsibility of man as a moral agent. I am quite at a loss to conceive from what part of my writings this inference has been drawn, as I have not only never entertained such opinions myself, but have taken pains to explain the passage in the Ved on which this false doctrine is founded. In page 93 of the Preface to the Ishopanishad, I have said that, " the Vedant by declaring that God is everywhere, and every thing is in God, means that nothing is absent from God, and that nothing bears real existence except by the volition of God." And again, in the same page I quoted the example of the most revered teachers of the Vedant doctrine, who, " although they declared their faith in the Omnipresent God, according to the doctrines of the Vedant, assigned to every creature the particular character and respect he was entitled to."

I omitted to notice the strange mode of argument which the learned Brhmun (at p. 29) has adopted in defence of idolatry. After acknowledging that the least deficiency in judgment renders man incapable of looking up to an Omnipresent Supreme Being, whereby he mistakes a created object

* P. 47,1. 4-

for the great Creator, he insinuates that an erroneous notion in this respect is as likely to lead to eternal happiness, as a knowledge of truth. At 1. 5, he says: "And although a person through deficiency in judgment, should be unable to discover the real nature of a thing, does it follow, that his error will prevent the natural effect from appearing? When a man in a dream sees a tiger, is he not in as much alarm as if he saw it in reality?"

This mode of claiming for idol-worship a value equal to that of pure religion, which it can never be admitted to possess, may have succeeded in retaining some of his followers in the delusive dream, from which he is so anxious that they should not be awoke. But some of them have, I know, begun to inquire into the truth of those notions in which they have been instructed; and these are not likely to mistake for true, the false analogy that is in the above passage attempted to be drawn; nor will they believe thai, however powerful may be the influence of imagination, even under false impressions, future happiness, which depends on God alone, can ever be ranked amongst its effects. Such enquirers will, I hope, at last become sensible that the system of *dreaming* recommended by the learned Brahmun, however essential to the interests of himself and of his caste, cañt bring to them no advantage, either substantial or eternal.

As instances of the erroneous confidence which is placed in the repetition of the name of a god to effect purification from sins, noticed by me in p. 148, I may quote the following passages.

He who pronounces "Doorga" (the name of the goddess), though he constantly practise adultery, plunder others of their property, or commit the most heinous crimes, is freed from all sins.*

A person pronouncing loudly, "reverence to Hurī," even

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* *Vide* **Doorga nám Mahatmyu.**

involuntarily, in the state of falling down, of slipping, of labouring under illness, or of sneezing, purifies himself from the foulest crimes.*

He who contemplates the Ganges, while walking, sitting, sleeping, thinking of other things, awake, eating, breathing, and conversing, is delivered from sins.†

The circumstances alluded to in p. 148 of this treatise, relative to the wicked conduct of their supposed deities, are perfectly familiar to every individual Hindoo. But those Europeans who are not acquainted with the particulars related of them, may perhaps feel a wish to be in possession of them. I, therefore, with a view to gratify their curiosity and to vindicate my assertion, beg to be allowed to mention a few instances in point, with the authorities on which they rest. As I have already noticed the debauchery of Krishna, and his gross sensuality, and that of his fellow-deities, such as Siva and Bruhma, in the 147th, 148th, and 150th page of my reply to the observations of Sunkara Sastri, instead of repeating them here, I refer my readers to that reply, also to the tenth division of the Bhaguvut, to the Hury-Bungsu or last division of the Maha-Bharuth, and to the Negums, as well as to the several Agums, which give a detailed account of their lewdness and debauchery. As to falsehood, their favourite deity Krishna is more conspicuous than the rest. Jurra-Sundh, a powerful prince of Behar, having heard of the melancholy murder of his son-in-law perpetrated by Krishna, harassed, and at last drove him out of the place of his nativity (Muthoora) by frequent military expeditions. Krishna, in revenge, resolved to deprive that prince of his life by fraud, and in a most unjustifiable manner. To accomplish his object, he and his two cousins, Bheema and Urjoona, declared themselves to be Brahmuns and in that disguise entered his palace ; where, finding him weakened by a reli-

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* *Vide* Bhaguvut. † *Vide* Maha-Bharuth.

gious fast, and surrounded only by his family and priests, they challenged him to fight a duel. He accordingly fought Bheema, the strongest of the three, who conquered and put him to death.—*Vide Subha-Purba, ox Second Book of the Maha-Bharuth.* Krishna again persuaded Yoodhisthir, his cousin, to give false evidence in order to accomplish the murder of Dron, their spiritual father.—*Vide Dron-Purba,* or *Seventh Book of the Maha-Bharuth.*

Vishnu and others combined in a conspiracy against Buli, a mighty emperor: but finding his power irresistible, that deity was determined to ruin him by stratagem, and for that purpose appeared to him in the shape of a dwarf, begging alms. Notwithstanding Buli was warned of the intention of Vishnu, yet, impressed with a high sense of generosity, he could not refuse a boon to a beggar; that grateful deity in return not only deprived him of his whole empire, which he put himself in possession of by virtue of the boon of Buli, but also inflicted on him the disgrace of bondage and confinement in Patal.—*Vide Latter Part of the Hury-Bungs,* or *Last Book of the Maha-Bharuth.*

When the battle of Coorookshetru was decided by the fatal destruction of Doorjodhun, the remaining part of the army of his rival Yoodhisthir, returned to the camp to rest during the night, under the personal care and protection of Mahadeva. That deity having, however, been cajoled by the flattery offered him by Uswathama, one of the friends of the unfortunate Doorjodhun, not only allowed him to destroy the whole army that was asleep under the confidence of his protection, but even assisted him with his sword to accomplish his bloody purpose.—*Vide Sousuptik Purba,* or *Eleventh Book of the Maha-Bharuth.*

When the Ussoors, at the churning of the ocean, gave the pitcher of *the water of immortality* in charge to Vishnu, he betrayed his trust by delivering it to their step-brothers

and enemies, the celestial gods.—*Vide First Book*, or *Adi Purba of the Maha-Bharuth.*

Instances like these might be multiplied beyond number: and crimes of a much deeper *dye* might easily be addied to the list, were I not unwilling to stain these pages by making them the vehicle of such stories of immorality and vice. May God speedily purify the minds of my countrymen from the corruptness which such tales are too apt to produce; and lead their hearts to that pure morality, which is inseparable from the true worship of Him!

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

PURSUIT OF FINAL BEATITUDE,

INDEPENDENTLY OF

BRAHMUNICAL OBSERVANCES.

CALCUTTA:

1820.

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

PURSUIT OF FINAL BEATITUDE.

SOOBRAHMUNYU SHASTREE, a diligent observer of Brahmunical tenets, wishing to prove that those Brahmuns who do not study the Véds with their subordinate sciences, are degraded from the rank of Brahmunism, prepared and offered an Essay on that subject to the Brahmuns of the province of Bengal, who are generally deficient in those studies. In this, he has advanced three assertions : which, however, have no tendency to establish his position. He alleges Ist, that, " to a person not acquainted with the Véds, neither temporary heavenly enjoyments, nor eternal beatitude, can be allotted." 2dly, that, " he only who has studied the Véds is authorized to seek the knowledge of God ; " and 3dly, that " men must perform without omission all the rites and duties prescribed in the Véds and Smritis before acquiring a thorough knowledge of God." On these positions he attempts to establish, that the performance of the duties and rites prescribed by the Shastrus for each class according to their religious order, such as the studies of the Veds and the offering of sacrifices, etc., is absolutely necessary towards the acquisition of a knowledge of God. We consequently take upon ourselves to offer in our own defence the following remarks, in answer to those assertions.

We admit that it is proper in men to observe the duties and rites prescribed by the Shastru for each class according to their religious order, in acquiring knowledge respecting God, such observance being conducive to that acquisition; an admission which is not inconsistent with the authorities of the Véds and other Shastrus. But we can by no means

admit the necessity of observing those duties and rites as indispensable steps towards attaining divine knowledge, which the learned Shastree pronounces them to be; for the great Vyas, in his work of the Védánt Durshun, or the explanation of the spiritual parts of the Véds, justifies the attainment of the knowledge of God, even by those who never practise the prescribed duties and rites, as appears from the following two passages of Vyas in the same Durshun. " Unturachapitoo tuddrishteh," " Upichu shmuryute." The celebrated Shunkur-Acharyu thus comments upon those two Texts : " As to the question, Whether such men as have not the sacred fire, or are afflicted with poverty, who profess no religious order whatsoever, and who do not belong to any caste, are authorized to seek divine knowledge or not ? On a superficial view, it appears, that they are not permitted to make such attainments, as the duties prescribed for each class are declared to lead to divine knowledge, and to those duties they are altogether stangers. Such doubt having arisen, the great Vyas thus decides : Even a person who professes no religious order, is permitted to acquire a knowledge of God; for it is found in the Véds that Ruekyu, Bachuknuvee, and others, who, like them, did not belong to any class, obtained divine knowledge. It is also mentioned in the sacred tradition, the Sumvurtu and Others, living naked and totally independent of the world, who practised no prescribed duties, assumed the rank of the highest devotees." Besides the Texts of the Ved, such as " Tuyorhu Muetreyee Bruhmubadinee," etc., and " Atma va Ure" etc., show that Muetreyee and others, who, being women, had not the option of studying the Véd, were, notwithstanding, qualified to acquire divine knowledge ; and in the Smriti as well as in the Commentary of the celebrated Sunkur-Acharyu, Soolubha and other women are styled knowers of the Supreme Being. Also Bidoor, Dhurmubyadhu, and others of the fourth class, attained the know-

ledge of God without having an opportunity of studying the Véds. All this we find in the sacred traditions : hence those who have a thorough knowledge of the Véds and Smriti, can pay no deference to the opinion maintained by the learned Shastree, that those only who have studied the Véds are qualified to acquire the knowledge of God. Moreover, to remove all doubt as to Soodrus and others being capable of attaining Divine knowledge without the assistance of the Veds, the celebrated Commentator, in illustrating the Text "Sruvunadhyun," etc., asserts, that " The authority of the Smriti, stating that ' to all the four classes preaching should be offered/ etc., shews that to the sacred traditions, and to the Poorans, and also to the Agums, all the four classes have equally access." Thus establishing that the sacred traditions, Poorans, and Agum without distinction, can impart divine knowledge to mankind at large. From the decided opinion of Vyas, and from the precedents given by the Veds and sacred traditions, and also front the conclusive verdict of the most revered Com'merrtator, those who entertain respect for those authorities, will not admit the studies of the Veds and other duties required of each class to be the only means of acquiring knowledge of God. Hence the sacred tradition,, stating that a person, by studying the Geeta alone, had acquired final beatitude, stands unshaken ; and also the positive declaration of the great Muhadevu with regard to the authentic and well-accepted Agum Shastras, as being the means of imparting divine knowledge to those who study them, will not be treated as inconsequential. If the spiritual parts of the Véds can enable men to acquire salvation by teaching them the true and eternal existence of God, and the false and perishable being of the universe, and inducing them to hear and constantly reflect on those doctrines, it is consistent with reason to admit, that the Smriti, and Agum, and other works, inculcating the same doctrines, afford means of attaining final beatitude. What should we say more ?

TRANSLATION

OF

A CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

AN ADVOCATE FOR, AND AN OPPONENT OF,

THE PRACTICE OP

BURNING WIDOWS ALIVE;

FROM

THE ORIGINAL BUNGLA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE little tract, of which the following is a literal translation, originally written in Bungla, has been for several weeks past in extensive circulation in those parts of the country where the practice of widows burning themselves on the pile of their Husbands is most prevalent An idea that the arguments it contains might tend to alter the notions that some European Gentlemen entertain on this subject, has induced the Writer to lay it before the British Public also in its present dress.

Nov. 30, 1818.

CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

AN ADVOCATE FOR,

AND

AN OPPONENT OF,

THE PRACTICE OF

BURNING WIDOWS ALIVE.

Advocate.—I AM surprised that you endeavour to oppose *the* practice of Concremation and Postcremation of Widows,* as long observed in this country.

Opponent.—Those who have no reliance on the Shastru, and those who take delight in the self-destruction of women, may well wonder that we should oppose that suicide which is forbidden by all the Shastrus, and by every race of men.

Advocate.—You have made an improper assertion, in alleging that Concremation and Postcremation are forbidden by the Shastrus. Hear what Ungira and other saints have said on this subject:

" That woman who, on the death of her husband, ascends the burning pile with him, is exalted to heaven, as equal to Uroondhooti.

" She who follows her husband to another world, shall dwell in a region of joy for so many years as there are hairs in the human body, or thirty-five millions.

" As a serpent-catcher forcibly draws a snake from his

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* When a widow is absent from her husband at the time of his death, she may in certain cases burn herself along with some relick representing the deceased. The practice is called Unoomurun or Postcremation.

hole, thus raising her husband by her power, she enjoys delight along with him.

" The woman who follows her husband expiates the sins of three races ; her father's line, her mother's line, and the family of him to whom she was given a virgin.

" There possessing her husband as her chiefest good, herself the best of women, enjoying the highest delights, she partakes of bliss with her husband as long as fourteen Indrus feign.

" Even though the man had slain a Brahmun, or returned evil for good, or killed an intimate friend, the woman expiates those crimes.

" There is no other way known for a virtuous woman except ascending the pile of her husband. It should be understood that there is no other duty whatever after the death of her husband."

Hear also what Vyas has written in the parable of the pigeon :

"A pigeon, devoted to her husband, after his death entered the flames, and ascending to heaven, she there found her husband."

And hear Hareet's words :

"As long as a woman shall not burn herself after her husband's death, she shall be subject to transmigration in a female form."

Hear too what Vishnoo the saint says :

" After the death of her husband a wife must live as an ascetic, or ascend his pile."

Now hear the words of Bruhmu Pooran on the subject of Postcremation :

" If her lord die in another country, let the faithful wife place his sandals on her breast, and pure enter the fire."

The faithful widow is declared no suicide by this Text of the Rig Ved: " When three days of impurity are gone she obtains obsequies."

Gotum says :

"To a Brahmunee after the death of her husband, Post-cremation is not permitted. But to women of the other classes it is esteemed a chief duty."

" Living let her benefit her husband ; dying she commits suicide."

" The woman of the Brahmun tribe that follows her dead husband cannot, on account of her self-destruction, convey either herself or her husband to heaven."

Concremation and Postcremation being thus established by the words of many sacred lawgivers, how can you say they are forbidden by the Shastrus, and desire to prevent their practice ?

Opponent,—All those passages you have quoted are indeed sacred law ; and it is clear from those authorities, that if women perform Concremation or Postcremation, they will enjoy heaven for a considerable time. But attend to what Munoo and others say respecting the duty of widows : " Let her emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruits, but let her not, when her lord is deceased/ even pronounce the name of another mah."

" Let her continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one only husband."

Here Munoo directs, that after the death of her husband, the widow should pass her whole life as an ascetic. Therefore, the laws given by Ungira and others whom you have quoted, being contrary to, the law of Munoo, cannot be accepted; because the Ved declares, " Whatever Munoo has said is wholesome;" and Vrihusputi, " Whatever law is contrary to the law of Munoo is not commendable." The Ved especially declares, " By living in the practice of regular and occasional duties the mind may be purified.

Thereafter by hearing, reflecting, and constantly meditating on the Supreme Being, absorption in Bruhmu may be attained. Therefore from a desire during life of future fruition, life ought not to be destroyed." Munoo, Yagnyuvulkyu, and others, have then, in their respective codes of laws, prescribed to widows the duties of ascetics only. By this passage of the Ved, therefore, and the authority of Munoo and others, the words you have quoted from Ungira and the rest are set aside; for by the express declaration of the former, widows after the death of their husbands may, by living as ascetics, obtain absorption.

Advocate.—What you have said respecting the laws of Ungira and others, that recommended the practice of Concremation and Postcremation; we do not admit: because, though a practice has not been recommended by Munoo, yet, if directed by other lawgivers, it should not on that account be considered as contrary to the law of Munoo. For instance, Munoo directs the performance of Sundhya, but says nothing of calling aloud on the name of Huri; yet Vyas prescribes calling on the name of Huri. The words of Vyas do not contradict those of Munoo. The same should be understood in the present instance. Munoo has commended widows to live as ascetics; Vishnoo and other saints direct that they should either live as ascetics or follow their husbands. Therefore the law of Munoo may be considered to be applicable as an alternative.

Opponent.—The analogy ydu have drawn betwixt the practice of Sundhya and invoking Huri, and that of Concremation and Postcremation does not hold. For, in the course of the day the performance of Sundhya, at the prescribed time, does not prevent one from invoking Huri at another period; and, on the other hand, the invocation of Huri need not interfere with the performance of Sundhya. In this case* the direction of one practice is not inconsistent with that of the other. But in the case of living as an ascetic or under-

going Concremation, the performance of the one is incompatible with the observance of the other. *Scil.* Spending one's whole life as an ascetic after the death of a husband; is incompatible with immediate Concremation as directed by Ungira and others; and, *vice versa,* Concremation, as directed by Ungira and others, is inconsistent with living as an ascetic, in order to attain absorption. Therefore those two authorities are obviously contradictory of each other. More especially as Ungira, by declaring that " there is no other way known for a virtuous woman except ascending the pile of her husband," has made Concremation an indispensable duty. And Hareet also, in his code, by denouncing evil consequences, in his declaration, that " as long as a woman shall not burn herself after the death of her husband, she shall be subject to transmigration in a female form," has made this duty absolute. Therefore all those passages are in every respect contradictory to the law of Munoo and others.

Advocate.—When Ungira says that there is no other way for a widow except Concremation, and when Hareet says that the omission of it is a fault, we reconcile their words with those of Munoo,* by considering them as used merely for the purpose of exalting the merit, of Concremation, but not as prescribing this as an indispesable duty. All these expressions, moreover, convey a promise of reward for Concremation, and thence it appears that Concremation is only optional.

Opponent.—If, in order to reconcile them with the Text of Munoo, you set down the words of Ungira and Hareet, that make the duty incumbent, as meant only to convey an exaggerated praise of Concremation, why do you not also reconcile the rest of the words of Ungira, Hareet, and others, with those in which Munoo prescribes to the widow the practice of living as an ascetic as her absolute duty? And why do you not keep aloof from witnessing the destructioa

of females, instead of tempting them with the inducement of future fruition? Moreover, in the Text already quoted, self-destruction with the view of reward is expressly prohibited.

Advocate.—What you have quoted from Munoo and Yagnyavulkyu and the Text of the Vĕd is admitted. But how can you set aside the following Text of the Rig Vĕd on the subject of Concremation? " O fire! let these women, with bodies anointed with clarified butter, eyes coloured with collyrium, and void of tears, enter thee, the parent of water, that they may not be separated from their husbands, but may be, in unison with excellent husbands, themselves sinless and jewels amongst women."

Opponent.—This Text of the Vĕd, and the former passages from Hareet and the rest whom you have quoted, all praise the practice of Concremation as leading to fruition, and are addressed to those who are occupied by sensual desires; and you cannot but admit that to follow these practices is only optional In repeating the Sunkulpyu of Concremation, the desire of future fruition is declared as the object. The Text therefore of the Vĕd which we have quoted, offering no gratifications, supersedes, in every respect, that which you have adduced, as well as all the words of Ungira and the rest. In proof we quote the Text of the Kut'hopunishud: " Faith in God which leads to absorption is one thing; and rites which have future fruition for their object, another. Each of these/jproducing different consequences, holds out to man inducements to follow it. The man, who of these two chooses faith, is blessed; and he, who for the sake of reward practices rites, is dashed away from the enjoyment of eternal beatitude." Also the Moonduk Opunishud: " Rites, of which there are eighteen members, are all perishable: he who considers them as the source of blessing shall undergo repeated transmigrations; and all those fools who, immersed in the foolish practice of rites, consider themselves to be wise and learned, are repeatedly subjected to birth, disease, death,

and other pains. When one blind man is guided by another, both subject themselves on their way to all kinds of distress."

It is asserted in the Bhugvut Geeta, the essence of all the Smritis, Poorans, and Itihases, that, " all those ignorant persons who attach themselves to the words of the Véds that convey promises of fruition, consider those falsely alluring passages as leading to real happiness; and say, that besides them there is no other reality. Agitated in their minds by these desires, they believe the abodes of the celestial gods to be the chief object; and they devote themselves to those Texts which treat of ceremonies and their fruits, and entice by promises of enjoyment. Such people can have no real confidence in the Supreme Being." Thus also do the Moonduk Opunishud and the Geeta state that, " the science by which a knowledge of God is attained is superior to all other knowledge." Therefore it is clear, from those passages of the Ved and of the Geeta, that the words of the Ved which promise fruition, are set aside by the Texts of a contrary import. Moreover, the ancient saints and holy teachers, and their commentators, and yourselves, as well as we and all others, agree that Munoo is better acquainted than any other lawgiver with the spirit of the Véds. And he, understanding the meaning of those different Texts, admitting the inferiority of that which promised fruition, and following that which conveyed no promise of gratification, has directed widows to spend their lives as ascetics. He has also defined in his 12th Chapter, what acts are observed merely for the^ajce of gratifications, and what are not. " Whatever act is performed for the sake of gratifications in this world or the next is called Pruburttuk, and those which are performed according to the knowledge respecting God, are called Niburttuk. All those who perform acts to procure gratifications, may enjoy heaven like the Gods; and he who performs acts free from desires, procures release from the five elements of his body; that is, obtains absorption."

Advocate.—What you have said is indeed consistent with the Veds, with Munoo, and with the Bhuguvut Geeta. But from this I fear, that the passages of the Veds and other Shastrus, that prescribe Concremation and Postcremation as the means of attaining heavenly enjoyments, must be considered as only meant to deceive.

Opponent.—There is no deception. The object of those passages is declared. As men have various dispositions, those whose minds are enveloped in desire, passion and cupidity, have no inclination for the disinterested worship of the Supreme Being. If they had no Shastrus of rewards, they would at once throw aside all Shastrus, and would follow their several inclinations, like elephants unguided by the hook. In order to restrain such persons from being laid only by their inclinations, the Shastru prescribes various ceremonies; as Shuenjag, for one desirous of the destruction of the enemy; Pootreshti for one desiring a son ; and Jyotishtom for one desiring gratifications in heaven, etc.; but again reprobates such as are actuated by those desires, and at the same moment expresses contempt for such gratifications. Had the Shastru not repeatedly reprobated both those actuated by desire and the fruits desired by them, all those Texts might be considered as deceitful. In proof of what I have advanced I cite the following Text of the Opunishud, "Knowledge and rites together offer themselves to every man. The wise man considers which of these two is the better and which the worse. By reflection, he becomes convinced of the superiority of the former, despises rites, and takes refuge in knowledge. And the unlearned, for the sake of bodily gratification, has recourse to the performance of rites." The Bhuguvut Geeta : "The Veds that treat of rites are for the sake of those who are possessed of desire; therefore, O Urjoon ! do you abstain from desires."

Hear also the Text of the Ved reprobating the fruits of rites: "As in this world the fruits obtained from cultivation

and labour perish, so in the next world fruits derived from rites are perishable." Also the Bhuguvut Geeta : " All those who observe the rites prescribed by the three Véds, and through those ceremonies worship me and seek for heaven, having become sinless from eating the remains of offerings, ascending to heaven, and enjoying the pleasures of the gods, after the completion of their rewards, again re-turn to earth. Therefore, the observers of rites-for the sake of rewards, repeatedly, ascend to heaven, and return to the world, and cannot obtain absorption."

Advocate.—Though what you have advanced 'frqm the Véd and sacred codes against the practice of Concremation and Postcremation, is not to be set aside, yet we have had the practice prescribed by Hareet and pthers handed down to us.

Opponent.—Such an argument is highly inconsistent with justice. It is every way improper to persuade to setf-destruction, by citing passages of inadmissible authority, In the second place, it is evident from your own authorities, and the Sunkulpu recited in conformity with them, that the widow should voluntarily quit life, ascending the flaming pile of her husband. But, on the contrary, you first bind down the widow along with the corpse of her husband, and then heap over her such a quantity of wood that she cannot rise. At the time too of setting fire to the pile, you press her down with large bamboos. In what passage of Hareet or the rest do you find authority for thus binding the woman according to your practice ? This then is, in fact, deliberate female murder.

Advocate.—Though Hareet and the rest do not indeed authorize this practice of binding, etc., yet were a woman after having recited the Sunkulpu not to perform Concrema-tion, it would be sinful, and considered disgraceful by others, It is on this account that we have adopted the custom.

Opponent.—Respecting the sinfulness of such an act, that is mere talk: for in the same codes it is laid down, that the performance of a penance will obliterate the sin of quitting the pile. Or in case of inability to undergo the regular penance, absolution may be obtained by bestowing the value of a cow, or three kahuns of kowries. Therefore the sin is no cause of alarm. The disgrace in the opinion of others is also nothing: for good men regard not the blame or reproach of persons who can reprobate those who abstain from the sinful murder of women. And do you not consider how great is the sin to kill a woman; therein forsaking the fear of God, the fear of conscience, and the fear of the Shastrus, merely from a dread of the reproach of those who delight in female murder?

Advocate.—Though tying down in this manner be not authorized by the Shastrus, yet we practise it as being a custom that has been observed throughout Hindoosthan.

Opponent—It never was the case that the practice of fastening down widows on the pile was prevalent throughout Hindoosthan: for it is but of late years that this mode'has been followed, and that only in Bengal, which is but a small part of Hindoosthan. No one besides who has the fear of God and man before him, will assert that male or female murder, theft, etc., from having been long practised, cease to be vices. If, according to your argument, custom ought to set aside the precepts of the Shastrus, the inhabitants of the forests and mountains who have been in the habits of plunder, must be considered as guiltless of sin, and it would be improper to endeavour to restrain their habits. The Shastrus, and the reasonings connected with them, enable us to discriminate right and wrong. In those Shastrus such female murder is altogether forbidden. And reason also declares, that to bind down a woman for her destruction, holding out to her the inducement of heavenly rewards, is a most sinful act.

Advocate.—This practice may be sinful or any thing else/ but we will not refrain from observing it. Should it cease, people would generally apprehend that if women did not perform Concremation on the death of their husbands, they might go astray; but if they burn themselves this fear is done away. Their family and relations are freed from apprehension. And if the husband could be assured during his life that his wife would follow him on the pile, his mind would be at ease from apprehensions of her misconduct.

Opponent.—What can be done, if, merely to avoid the possible danger of disgrace, you are unmercifully resolved to commit the sin of female murder, But is there not also a danger of a woman's going astray during the life-time of her husband, particularly when he resides for a long time in a distant country ? What remedy then have you got against this cause of alarm ?

Advocate.—There is a great difference betwixt the case of the husband's being alive, and of his death ; for while a husband is alive, whether he resides near or at a distance, a wife is under his control; she must stand in awe of him. But after his death that authority ceases, and she of course is divested of fear.

Opponent.—The Shastrus which command that a wife should live under the control of her husband during his life, direct that on his death she shall live under the authority of her husband's family, or else under that of her parental relations ; and the Shastrus have authorized the ruler of the country to maintain the observance of this law. Therefore, the possibility of a woman's going astray cannot be more guarded against during the husband's life than it is after his death. For you daily see, that even while the husband is alive, he gives up his authority, and the life separates from him. Control alone cannot restrain from evil thoughts, words, and actions ; but the suggestions of wisdom and the

fear of God may cause both man and woman to abstain from sin. Both the Shastrus and experience show this.

Advocate.—You have repeated by asserted, that from want of feeling we promote female destruction. This is incorrect, for it is declared in our Ved and codes of law, that mercy is the root of virtue, and from our practice of hospitality, etc., our compassionate dispositions are well known.

Opponent.—That in other cases you shew charitable dispositions is acknowledged. But by witnessing from your youth the Voluntary burning of women amongst your elder relatives, your neighbours, and the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and by observing the indifference manifested at the time when the women are writhing under the torture of the flames, habits of insensibility are produced. For the same reason, when men or Women are suffering the pains of death, you feel for them no sense of compassion. Like the worshippers of the female deities, who, witnessing from their infancy the slaughter of kids and buffaloes, feel no compassion for them in the time of their suffering death ; while followers of Vishnoo are touched with strong feelings of pity.

Advocate.—What you have said I shall carefully consider.

Opponent.—It is to me a source of great satisfaction, that you are now ready to take this matter into your consideration. By forsaking prejudice and reflecting on the Shastru, what is really conformable to its precepts may be perceived, and the evils and disgrace brought on this country by the crime of female murder will cease.

A SECOND CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

AN ADVOCATE FOR, AND AN OPPONENT OF,

THE PRACTICE OF

BURNING WIDOWS ALIVE;

CALCUTTA:

1820.

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS,

COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN, &C, &C.

THE following tract, being a translation of a Bengalee Essay, published some time ago, as an appeal to reason in behalf of humanity, I take the liberty to dedicate to YOUR LADYSHIP; for to whose protection can any attempt to promote a benevolent purpose be with so much propriety committed ?

I have the honour to remain, with the greatest respect,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S

Most obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

February 26, 1820.

ON CONCREMATION;

A SECOND CONFERENCE BETWEEN AN ADVOCATE AND AN OPPONENT OF THAT PRACTICE.

Advocate.—-UNDER the title of Vidhayuk, or Preceptor, I have offered an answer to your former arguments. That, no doubt, you have attentively perused. I now expect your reply.

Opponent.—-I have well considered the answer that, after the lapse of nearly twelve months, you have offered. Such parts of your answer as consist merely of a repetition of passages already quoted by us, require no further observations now.' But as to what you have advanced in opposition to our arguments and to the Shastrus, you will be pleased to attend to my reply.

In the first place, at the bottom of your 4th page you have given a particular interpretation to the following words of Vishnoo, the lawgiver :—

" Mrite bhurturl bruhmuchuryum tudunwarohunum va," meaning " After the death of her husband a woman shall become an ascetic, or ascend the funeral pile," implying that either alternative is optional. To this, you say, eight objections are found in the Shastrus, therefore one of the alternatives must be preferred: that is to say, the woman who is unable to ascend the flaming pile shall live as an ascetic. This you maintain is the true interpretation; and in proof you have cited the words of the Skundu Pooran and of Ungira. I answer: In every country all persons observe this rule, that meanings are to be inferred from the words used. In this instance the Text of Vishnoo is comprised in five

words: Ist, Mrite, "on death;" 2nd, bhurturi, "of a husband;" 3rd, bruhmuchuryum, "asceticism;" 4th, tudunwarohunum, "ascending his pile;" 5th, va, "or." That is, "on the death of a husband, *his widow should* become an ascetic, or ascend his pile." It appears, therefore, from asceticism being mentioned first in order, that this is the most pious conduct for a widow to follow. But your interpretation, that this alternative is only left for widows who are unable to ascend the flaming pile, can by no means be deduced from the words of the Text; nor have any of the expounders of the Shastrus so expressed themselves.

For instance, the author of the Mitakshura, whose authority is always to be revered, and whose words you have yourself quoted as authority in p. 27, has thus decided on the subject of Concremation :—" The widow who is not desirous of final beatitude, but who wishes only for a limited term of a small degree of future fruition, is authorized to accompany her husband."

The Smartu Bhuttacharjyu (Rughoo Nundun, the modern law commentator of Bengal) limited the words of Ungria, that " besides Concremation there is no other pious course for a widow," by the authority of the foregoing Text of Vishnoo ; and authorized the alternative of a widow living as an ascetic, or dying with her husband; explaining the words of Ungira as conveying merely the exaggerated praise of Concremation.

Secondly.—From the time that Shastrus have been written in Sungskrit, no author or man of learning has ever asserted, as you have done, that the person who, desirous of the enjoyments of heaven, is unable to perform the rites leading to fruition, may devote himself to the attainment of final beatitude. On the contrary, the Shastrus uniformly declare that those who are unable to pursue final beatitude, may perform rites, but without desire; and persons of the basest minds, who do not desire eternal beatitude, may even perform rites for the sake of their fruits.

As Vusishthu declares :—

" The person who does not exert himself to acquire that knowledge of God which leads to final absorption, may perform ceremonies without expectation of reward."

" To encourage and improve those ignorant persons, who, looking only to pleasure, cannot distinguish betwixt what is God and not God, the Srooti has' promised rewards."

Bhuguvud Geeta.

" If you are unable to acquire by degrees divine knowledge, be diligent in performing works with a view *to* please me, that by such works you may acquire a better state* If you are unable even to perform rites solely for my sake, then, controlling your senses, endeavour to perform rites without the desire of fruition."

Therefore, to give the preference to self-immolation, or to the destruction of others, for the sake of future rewards, over asceticism, which gives a prospect of eternal beatitude, is to treat with contempt the authorities of the Véds, the Vdddnt, and other Durshuns, as well as of the Bhuguvud Geeta and many others. As the Ved says:

" Knowledge and rites both offer themselves to man ; but he who is possessed of wisdom, taking their respective natures into serious consideration, distinguishes one from the other, and chooses faith, despising fruition; while fool, for the sake of advantage and enjoyment, accepts the offer of rites,"

Without entirely rejecting the authority of the Geeta, the essence of all Shastrus, no one can praise rites performed for the sake of fruition, nor recommend them to others ; for nearly half of the Bhuguvud Geeta is filled with the dispraise of such works, and with the praise of works performed with^ out desire of fruition. A few of those passages have been quoted in the former conference, and a few others are here given.

"Works performed, except for the sake of God, only entangle the soul. Therefore, O Urjoon, forsaking desire, perform works with the view to please God."

"The person who performs works without desire of fruition, directing his mind to God, obtains eternal rest. And the person who is devoted to fruitidn, and performs works with desire, he is indeed inextricably involved."

"Oh, Urjoon, rites performed for the sake of fruition are degraded far below works done withdut desire, which lead to the acquisition of the knowledge of God. Therefore perform thou works without desire of fruition, with the view of acquiring divine knowledge. Those who perform works for the sake of fruition are most debased."

"It is my firm opinion that works are to be performed, forsaking their consequences, and the prospect of their fruits."

The Geeta is not a rare work, and you are not unacquainted with it. Why then do you constantly mislead women, unacquainted with the Shastrus, to follow a debased path, by holding out to them as temptations the pleasures of futurity, in defiance of all the Shastrus, and merely to please the ignorant ?

You have said, that eight objections are to be found in Shastrus to the optional alternative deduced from the works of Vishnoo. To this I reply :

First.—-To remove an imaginary difficulty, a violation of the obvious interpretation of words, whose meaning is direct and consistent, is altogether inadmissible.

Secondly.—Former commentators, finding no such objection to the interpretation given to the words of Vishnoo, as allowing the optional alternative of asceticism or Concremation, have given the preference to asceticism. The author of the Mitakshura, quoting this Text of Vishnoo in treating of Concremation, makes no allusion to such an objection, but finally declares in favour of asceticism.

Thirdly.—Even allowing an optional alternative to be liable to the eight objections, former authors have on many occasions admitted such an alternative. For example:—

Srooti.—" Oblations are to be made of wheat or of barley." But the meaning of this is not, according to your mode of interpretation, "That if it cannot be made of barley, an offering is to be made of wheat."

" Burnt offering is to be made at sunrise or before sunrise." In this instance your mode of explanation may be applied; but no authors have ever given such an interpretation, but all have admitted the alternative to be optional.

"उपासीत जगन्नाथं शिवम्वा जगतां पतिम् ।"

Here also, according to your opinion, the meaning would be, that if you cannot worship Shivu you should worship Vishnoo. But no authors have ever given such an interpretation to those words, and to give more or less worship to Shivu than to Vishnoo is quite contrary to the decision of all the Shastrus.

Fourthly.—The following Text has also been quoted by you in opposition to the optional alternative in question, taken as you assert from the Skundu Pooran :—

" On the death of her husband, if by chance a woman is unable to perform Concremation, nevertheless she should preserve that virtue required of widows. If she cannot preserve that virtue, she must descend to hell." To confirm this Text you have quoted the words of Ungira :—

" There is no other pious course for a widow besides Concremation;" which you have interpreted, that " for a widow there is no other course so pious."

I answer, the words of Ungira are express, that there is no other pious course for a widow than Concremation. And the Smartu commentator, having thus interpreted the Text, in reconciling with the words of Vishnoo already quoted, declares, that it conveys merely exaggerated praise of Concremation.

But you, in opposition to the true meaning of the expression and to the interpretation given by the Smartu commentator, have explained those words to suit your own argument, that there is no other course more pious than that of Concremation. Perverting thus the meaning of the Shastrus, what benefit do you propose by promoting the destruction of feeble woman, by holding up the temptation of enjoyments in a future state ? This I am at a loss to understand.

If the passage you have quoted from the Skundu Pooran really exist, the mode in which the Smartu commentator has explained the words of Ungira (" there is no other virtuous course,") must be applied to those of the Skundu Pooran, *viz.*, that the Text of the Skundu Pooran which contradicts Munoo, Vishnoo, and others, is to be understood as merely conveying exaggerated praise ; because, to exalt Concremation, which leads to future enjoyments that are treated as despicable by the Opunishuds of the Veds and Smriti, and by the Bhguvud Geeta, above asceticism, in which the mind may be purified by the performance of works, without desire that may lead to eternal beatitude, is every way inadmissible, and in direct opposition to the opinions maintained by ancient authors and commentators.

SECTION II.

IN the latter end of the 7th page you have admitted, that the sayings of Ungira, Vishnoo, and Hareet, on the subject of Concremation, are certainly at variance with those of Munoo; but assert, that any law given by Munoo, when contradicted by several other lawgivers, is to be considered annulled :— therefore, his authority in treating of the duties of widows is not admissible, on account of the discord existing between it and passages of Hareet, and Vishnoo, and others. With a view to establish this position you have advanced three arguments—the first of them is, that Vrihusputi says, " Whatever law is contrary to the law of Munoo, is not commendable ; " in which the nominative case, " whatever law," as being used in the singular number, signifies, that in case laws, given by a single person, stand in opposition to those of Munoo, they are not worthy of reverence; but if several persons differ from Munoo in any certain point, his authority must be set aside. I reply:—It has been the invariable practice of ancient and modern authors, to explain all Texts of law so as to make them coincide with the law of Munoo ; they in no instance declare that the authority of Munoo is to be set aside, in order to admit that of arty other lawgiver. But you have, on the contrary, set aside the authority of Munoo, on the ground of inconsistence with the words of two or three other authors. In this you not only act contrary to the practice of all commentators, but moreover, in direct opposition to the authority of the Ved : for the *Ved* declares, " Whatever Mpnoo lays down, that is commendable;" which Text you have yourself quoted in p. 7. And as to what you have said respecting the words of Vrihusputi as being in the singular number, and therefore only applicable to a case in which Munoo is opposed by only one lawgiver, it is obvious that the word " whatever," being a general term, includes every particular case falling under it ; and therefore his law must be followed, whatever number of authors there may be who

lay down a different direction. And the reason of this is expressed in the former part of the verse of Vrihusputi, that " Munoo has in his work collected the meaning of the Veds." From this it follows, that whatever Jaw is inconsistent with the Code of Munoo, which is the substance of the Ved, is really inconsistent with the Ved itself, and therefore inadmissible. Admitting the justice of your explanation of Vrihusputi's Text, that the authority of any individual lawgiver, who is inconsistent with Munoo, must be set aside; but that when several authorities coincide in laying down any rule inconsistent with his law, they are to be followed ; one might on the same principle give a new explanation to the following Text :—

"The person who attempts to strike a Brahmun goes to the hell called Sutnuyat, or of a hundred punishments ; and he who actually strikes a Brahmun, goes to the hell of Suhusruyat, or a thousand punishments."

Here, also, the noun in the nominative case, and that in the accusative case also, are both in the singular number; therefore, according to your exposition, where two or three persons concur in beating a Brahmun, or where a man beats two or three Brahmuns, there is no crime committed. There are many similar instances of laws, the force of which would be entirely frustrated by your mode of interpretation.

You have argued in the second place that the practice of Concremation is authorized by a Text of the Rig Ved, and consequently the authority of Munoo is superseded by a higher authority. I reply:—In the 12th line of the 9th page of your Tract, you have quoted and interpreted a Text of the Veds, expressing that " the mind may be purified so as to seek a knowledge of God from which absorption may accrue, by the performance of the daily and occasional ceremonies, without the desire of fruition; therefore, while life may be preserved, it ought not to be destroyed." With this then and all similar Texts, there is the

most evident concord with the words of Munoo. Notwithstanding your admission to this effect, you assert that the authority of the Véds contradicts the declaration of Munoo. From the Text already quoted, " that whatever Munoo has declared is to be accepted," it follows that there can be no discrepancy between Munoo and the Véd. But there is certainly an apparent inconsistency between the Text quoted from the ceremonial part of the Rig Véd authorizing Concremation, and that above quoted from the spiritual parts of the Véd, to which the celebrated Munoo has given the perference ; well aware that such parts of the Véd are of more authority than the passages relating to debased ceremonies. He has accordingly directed widows to live, practising austerities. The Text of the Rig Véd, of course, remains of force to those ignorant wretches who are fettered with the desire of fruition, which debars them from the hope of final beatitude. This too has been acknowledged by yourself, in p. 11, l. 17, and was also fully considered in the First Conference, p. 13, line 18. You cannot but be aware too, that when there is doubt respecting the meaning of any Text of the Véd, that interpretation which has been adopted by Munoo, is followed by both ancient and modern authors. In the Bhuvishyu Pooran, Muhadev gave instructions for the performance of a penance for wilfully slaying a Brahmun ; but observing that this was at variance with the words of Munoo, which declare that there is no expiation for wilfully killing a Brahmun, he does not set aside the Text of Munoo founded on the Veds by his own authority, but explains the sense in which it is to be accepted. " The object of the declaration of Munoo, that there is no expiation for the wilful murder of a Brahmun, was the more absolute prohibition of the crime ; or it may be considered as applicable to Kshutrees, and the other tribes." The great Muhadev, then, did not venture to set aside the words of Munoo, but you have proposed to set up the Texts of Hareet and Ungira as of superior authority.

Thirdly.—You have quoted, with the view of doing away with the authority of Munoo, the Text of Juemini, signifying that if there be a difference of opinion respecting a subject, then the decision of the greater number must be adopted; and therefore, as the authority of Munoo, in the present instance, is at variance with several writers, it must yield to theirs. I reply:—It is apparent that this Text, as well as common sense, only dictates, that where those who differ in opinion are equal in point of authority, the majority ought to be followed; but if otherwise, this Text is not applicable to the case. Thus the authority of the Ved, though single, cannot be set aside by the concurrent authorities of a hundred lawgivers; and in like manner the authority of Munoo, which is derived immediately from the Ved, cannot be set aside by the contradicting authorities of the others either singly or collectively. Moreover, if Ungira, Hareet, Vishnoo, and Vyas, authorized widows to choose the alternative of Concremation, or of living as ascetics; on the other hand, besides Munoo, Yugnyuvulkyu, Vusishthu, and several other lawgivers have prescribed asceticism only. Why, therefore, despising the authorities of Munoo and others, do you persist in encouraging the weak women to submit to murder, by holding out to them the temptations of future pleasures in heaven?

SECTION III.

THE quotations from the Moonduk Opunishud and the Bhuguvud Geeta, which we quoted in our First Conference, to shew the light in which rites should be held, you have repeated; and have also quoted some Texts of the Véds directing the performance of certain rites, such as,

" He who desires heavenly fruition shall perform the sacrifice of a horse."—In page 17 you have given your final conclusion on the subject to this effect:—" That rites are not prohibited, but that pious works performed without desire are preferable to works performed for the sake of fruition; and he also who performs those works without desire, is superior to him who performs works for the sake of fruition/'—If then works without desire are acknowledged by you to be superior to works with desire of fruition, why do you persuade widows to perform works for the sake of fruition, and do not recommend to them rather to follow asceticism, by which they may acquire eternal beatitude? And with respect to your assertion, that " rites are not prohibited," this is inconsistent with the Shastrus; for if all the Texts of the Véds and lawgivers, prohibiting rites, were to be quoted, they would fill a large volume; (of these a few have been already quoted by me in pp. 5 and 6.)—There are indeed Shastrus directing the performance of rites for the sake of fruition, but these are acknowledged to be of less authority than those which prohibit such rites; as is proved by the following Text from the Moonduk Opunishud:—" Shastrus are of two sorts, superior and inferior; of these the superior are those by which the Eternal God is approached."

In the Bhuguvud Geeta Krishnu says:—"Amongst Shastrus, I am those which treat of God."

In the Sree Bhaguvut is the following text:—" Ill-minted persons, not perceiving that the object of the Véd is to direct us to absorption, call the superficially tempting promises of

rewards their principal fruit; but such as know the *Veds* thoroughly do not hold this opinion."

The passages directing works for the sake of fruition are therefore adapted only for the most ignorant. Learned men should endeavour to withdraw all those ignorant persons from works performed with desire, but should never, for the sake of profit, attempt to drown them in the abyss of passion. Rughoo Nundun quotes and adopts the following words : " Learned men should not persuade the ignorant to perform rites for the sake of fruition ; for it is written in the Pooran, that he who knows the path to eternal happiness will not direct the ignorant to perform works with desire, as the good physician refuses to yield to the appetite of his patient for injurious food."

SECTION IV.

IN p. 17, 1. 13, of your treatise, you have said, that the Shastru does not admit that widows, in giving up the use of oil, and betel and sexual pleasures, etc., as ascetics, perform works without desire, and acquire absorption. And for this you advance two proofs: the first, that it appears that Munoo directs that a widow should continue till death as an ascetic, *aiming* to practise the incomparable rules of virtue that have been followed by such women as were devoted to only one husband. From the word *aiming,* it follows, that the duties of an ascetic, to be practised by widows, are of the nature of those performed with desire. Secondly.—From the subsequent words of Munoo it appears, that those widows who live austere lives ascend to heaven like ascetics from their youth; therefore, from the words ascending to heaven, it is obvious that the austerities that may be performed by them are for reward. I reply : — I am surprised at your assertion, that austerities practised by widows cannot be considered as performed without desire, and leading to absorption ; for whether austerities or any other kind of act be performed with desire or without desire, must depend on the mind of the agent. Some may follow asceticism or other practices for the sake of heavenly enjoyments, while others, forsaking desire of fruition, may perform them, and at length acquire final beatitude. Therefore, if a widow practise austerities without the desire of fruition, and yet her acts are asserted to be with desire of fruition, this amounts to a setting at defiance both experience and the Shastrus, in a manner unworthy of a man of learning like yourself. As to what you have observed respecting the word *aiming* in the Text of Munoo, it never can be inferred from the use of that word, that the asceticism of widows must necessarily be with desire; for with the object of final beatitude, we practise the acquisition of the knowledge of God, which no Shastru nor any of the learned has ever

classed amongst works performed with desire of fruition. For no man possessed of understanding performs any movement of mind or body without an object: it is those works only, therefore, that are performed for the sake of corporeal enjoyments, either in the present or in a future state of existence, that are said to be with desire, and that are, as such, prohibited, as Munoo defines :—" Whatever act is performed for the sake of gratifications in this world or the next is called Pruburttuk; and those which are performed according to the knowledge of God are called Niburttuk."

As to your second argument, that widows leading an ascetic life are rewarded by a mansion in heaven, I reply:— That from these words it does not appear that austerities should necessarily be reckoned amongst works performed for reward ; for a mansion in heaven is not granted to those alone who perform works with desire, but also to those who endeavour to acquire a knowledge of God, but come short of attaining it in this life. They must after death remain for a long time in the heaven called the Brumhulok, and again assume a human form, until they have, by perfecting themselves in divine knowledge, at length obtained absorption. The Bhuguvud Geeta says distinctly :

" A man whose devotions have been broken off by death, having enjoyed for an immensity of years the rewards of his virtues in the regions above, at length is born again in some holy and respectable family."

Koollook Bhuttu, the commentator on Munoo, says expressly, in his observations on the Text of his author, that those ascetic widows ascend to heaven like Sunuk, Balukhilyu and other devotees from their youth. By this, it is clearly shewn, that those widows ascend to heaven in the same way as those pious devotees who have already acquired final beatitude, which can only be attained by works performed without desire. And hence the austerities of widows must be reckoned amongst works without desire.

SECTION V.

IN page 18, you have asserted that a widow who undergoes Concremation has a higher reward than she who lives as a devotee ; for the husband of the woman who performs Concremation, though guilty of the murder of a Brahmun, or of ingratitude or treachery towards a friend, has his sins, by her act, expiated, and is saved from hell, and her husband's, her father's, and her mother's progenitors, are all beatified, and she herself is delivered from female form. I reply:—You have stated, in page 27, commencing at the 3rd line, that works without desire are preferable to those performed for the sake of fruition ; while here again you say, that Concremation is preferable to asceticism. You have, however, assigned as a reason for your new doctrine, that Concremation saves progenitors as well as the husband. I have already shewn, that such promises of reward are merely held out to the most ignorant, in order to induce them to follow some kind of religious observance, and to withdraw from evil conduct. Therefore, to prefer works performed with a desire of fruition, to works without desire, merely on the ground of such exaggerated promises, is contrary to all the Shastrus. If, in defiance of all the Shastrus, you maintain that such promises of reward are to be understood literally, and not merely as incitements, still there can be no occasion for so harsh a sacrifice, so painful to mind and body, as burning a person to death in order to save their lines of progenitors; for, by making an offering of one ripe plantain to Shivu, or a single flower of Kurubeer, either to Shivu or to Vishnoo, thirty millions of lines or progenitors may be saved.

" He, who maketh an oblation of a single ripe plantain to Shivu, shall with thirty, millions of races of progenitors ascend to the heaven of Shivu."

" By presenting a, single Kurubeer, white or not white, to Vishnoo or Shivu, thirty millions of races of progenitors are exalted to heaven."

Nor is there any want of promise of reward to those who perform works without desire. In fact, rather more abundant rewards are held out for such works than those you can quote for the opposite practice. " Those who have acquired knowledge in the prescribed mode can, by mere volition, save any number of progenitors; and all the gods offer worship to the devotees of the Supreme Being."

A volume filled with Texts of this kind might be easily written. Moreover, should even the least part of any ceremony performed for reward be omitted or mistaken, the fruits are destroyed, and evil is produced. But there is no bad consequence from a failure in works performed without desire, for the completion of these, even in part, is advantageous. In proof I quote the Bhuguvud Geeta : " Works without desire, if only commenced, are never without advantage ; and if any member be defective, evil consequences do not ensue, as in works performed with desire. And the performance of even a small portion of a work without desire brings safety.

There is evidently a possibility of a failure in some portion of the rites of Concremation or Postcremation, particularly in the mode in which you perform the ceremony contrary to the directions of the Shastrus. What connection is there betwixt that mode and the enjoyment of temporary heavenly gratifications—a mode which only subjects the widow to the consequences of a violent death !

SECTION VI.

AGAIN, in p. 17, l. 3, you admit it to be more commendable for a widow to attend to the acquisition of knowledge than to die by Concremation; but afterwards, in order to persuade them to the practice of Concremation, and to prevent them from pursuing the acquisition of knowledge, you observe, that women are naturally prone to pleasure, are extremely devoted to works productive of fruits, and are always subject to their passions. To persuade such persons to forsake Concremation, in order to attempt the acquisition of knowledge, is to destroy their hopes in both ways. In support of your opinion you have quoted the Geeta: "Those ignorant persons who are devoted to works ought not to be dissuaded from performing them."

I reply :—Your object in persuading womem to burn themselves may now be distinctly perceived; you consider women, even of respectable classes, as prone to pleasure, and always subject to their passions ; and therefore-you are apprehensive lest they should lose both prospects of hope, by giving up Concremation, and attempting to acquire knowledge. For this reason you lead them to the destruction of their lives, by holding out to them the temptation of future reward. It is very certain that all mankind, whether male or female, are endowed with a mixture of passions ; but by study of the Shastrus, and frequenting the society of respectable persons, those passions may be gradually subdued, and the capability of enjoying an exalted state may be attained. We ought, therefore, to endeavour to withdraw both men and women from debased sensual pleasures, and not to persuade them to die with the hope of thereby obtaining sensual enjoyments, by which, after a certain period of gratification, they are again immersed in the pollutions of the womb, and subjected to affliction. The Shastrus have directed those men or women, who seek after a knowledge of God, to hear and reflect upon his doctrine, that they may escape

from the grievous pain of this world; and they have also prescribed daily and occasional rites to be performed without the hope of reward by those who do not seek after divine knowledge, in order that their minds may be purified, and prepared to receive that knowledge. We, therefore, in conformity with the Shastru, make it our endeavour to dissuade widows from desiring future base and fleeting enjoyments, and encourage them to the acquisition of that divine knowledge which leads to final beatitude. Widows, therefore, by leading an ascetic life in the performance of duties without desire, may purify their minds and acquire divine knowledge, which may procure for them final beatitude. And consequently there is no reason why they should lose both objects of future hope by forsaking Concremation.

" Oh, Urjoon, by placing their reliance on me, women and those of the lower classes of Vueishyu and Soodpu may obtain the highest exaltation."

You, however, considering women devoted to their passions, and consequently incapable of acquiring divine knowledge, direct them to perform Concremation; and maintain that, if any amongst them should not burn with their husbands, according to your final decision from the Shastrus, they must lose the hopes that belong to both practices; because, according to your opinion, they are entirely incapable of acquiring divine knowledge, and by not adopting Concremation, they give up the prospect of future gratifications. As to your quotation from the Geeta, to show that persons devoted to works ought not to be dissuaded from the performance of them, it may be observed that this Text applies only to rites offered without desire of reward, though applied by you to works performed for the sake of future enjoyment, in direct inconsistency with the authority of the Geeta. The object of this, as well as of all Texts of the Geeta, is to dissuade men from works performed with

desire. The Geeta and its Commentaries are both accessible to all. Let the learned decide the point.

You have quoted the following Text of Vusishthu : " He who, being devoted to worldly pleasures, boasts, saying, ' I am a knower of God,' can neither obtain the consequences procurable from works, nor attain final beatitude, the fruit of divine knowledge."

I admit the force of this Text, For whether a man be devoted to worldly pleasures or not, if he be a boaster, either of divine knowledge or of any other acquirement, he is indeed most despicable; but I am unable to see how this Text, which forbids vain-glory, is applicable to the question before us, which relates to the Concremation of widows.

SECTION VII.

IN your 20th page, you have stated for us, that we do not object to the practice of Concremation, but to the tying down of the widow to the pile before setting it on fire. I reply:—This is very incorrect, for it is a gross misrepresentation of our argument; because Concremation or Fostcremation is a work performed for the sake of future reward,, which the Oopunishud and the Geeta, and other Shastrus, have declared to be most contemptible. Consequently, relying on those Shastrus, it has been always our abject to dissuade widows from the act of Concremation or Postcremation, that they might not, for the sake of the debased enjoyment of corporeal pleasures, renounce the attainment of divine knowledge, As to the mode in which you murder widows by tying them to the pile, we do exert ourselves to prevent such deeds, for those who are witnesses to an act of murder, and neglect to do any thing towards its prevention, are accomplices in the crime.

In justification of the crime of burning widows by force, you have stated, towards the foot of the same page, that in those countries where it is the custom for widows to ascend the flaming pile, there cannot be any dispute as to the propriety of following that mode : but where that is not the mode followed, and it is the practice for those that burn the corpse to place a portion of fire contiguous *to* the pile, so that it may gradually make its way to the pile, and at that time the widow, according to the prescribed form, ascends the pile ; in this mode also there is nothing contrary to the Shastrus. You have at the same time quoted two or three authorities to shew, that rites should be performed according to the custom of the country. I reply:—Female murder, murder of a Brahmun, parricide, and similar heinous crimes, cannot be reckoned amongst pious acts by alleging the custom of a country in their behalf; by such customs rather the country in which they exist is itself condemned. I shall

write more at large to this purpose in the conclusion. The practice, therefore, of forcibly tying down women to the pile, and burning them to death, is inconsistent with the Shastrus, and highly sinful. It is of no consequence to affirm, that this is customary in any particular country—if it were universally practised, the murders would still be criminal. The pretence that many are united in the commission of such murder will not secure them from divine vengeance. The customs of a country or of a race may be followed in matters where no particular rules are prescribed in the Shastrus; but the wilful murder of widows, prohibited by all Shastrus, is not to be justified by the practice of a few. From the Skundu Pooran : " In those matters in which neither the Veds nor law-givers give either direct sanction or prohibition, the customs of a country or of a race may be observed."

If you insist that the practice of a country or of a race, though directly contrary to the directions of the Shastrus, is still proper to be observed, and to be reckoned amongst lawful acts, I reply,—That in Shivukanchee and Vishnookanchee it is the custom of the people of all classes of one those places, whether learned or ignorant, mutually, to revile the god peculiarly worshipped by the people of the other—those of Vishnookanchee despising Shivu, and of Shivukanchee in the same manner holding Vishnoo in contempt. Are the inhabitants of those places, whose custom it is thus to revile Shivu and Vishnoo, not guilty of sin ? For each of those tribes may assert, in their own defence, that it is the practice of their country and race to revile the god of the other. But no learned Hindoo will pretend to say, that this excuse saves them from sin. The Rajpoots, also, in the neighbourhood of the Dooab, are accustomed to destroy their infant daughters; they also must not be considered guilty of the crime of child-murder, as they act according to the custom of their country and race. There are many instances of the

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same kind. No Pundits, then, would consider a heinous crime, directly contrary to the Shastrus, as righteous, by whatever length of practice it may appear to be sanctioned.

You have at first alleged, that to burn a widow after tying her down on the pile, is one of the acts of piety, and have then quoted our argument for the opposite oninion, that " the inhabitants of forests and mountains are accustomed to robbery and murder : but must these be considered as faultless, because they follow only the custom of their country ?" To this you have again replied, that respectable people are not to be guided by the example of mountaineers and foresters. But the custom of burning widows, you say, " has been sanctioned by the most exemplary Pundits for a length of time. It is the custom, then, of respectable people that is to be followed, and not that of men of no principles." I answer:—Respectability, and want of respectability, depend upon the acts of men. If the people of this province, who have been constantly guilty of the wilful murder of women by tying them to the pile in which they are burnt, are to be reckoned amongst the respectable, then why should not the inhabitants of mountains and forests be also reckoned good, who perpetrate murder for the sake of their livelihood, or to propitiate their cruel deities ? To shew that the custom of a country should be followed, you have quoted a Text of the Ved, signifying that the example of Brahmuns well versed in the Shastrus, of good understanding, and whose practice is in conformity with reason and the Shastrus, not subject to passion, and accustomed to perform good works, should be followed. And you have also quoted the words of Vyas, signifying that the authorities of the *Veds* and Shastrus, as well as of reason, being various, the practice pointed out by illustrious men should be adopted. I reply:—You have shewn that the example of mem versed in the Shastrus, and who act in conformity with reason and the Shastrus, should be followed ; but can you call those who, in defiance of the

Shastrus, wilfully put women to death by tying them down to the pile on which they are burned illustrious, acquainted with the Veds, and devoted to acts prescribed by the Shastrus and by reason? If not, their example is to be disregarded. If you can call those, who wilfully tie down women to put them to death, righteous and illustrious, then there is no instance of unrighteousness and depravity. I have already said, that when any act is neither directly authorized nor prohibited by the Shastrus, the custom of the country, or of the race, should be the rule of conduct; but in the present case, the words are express in prescribing that the widow shall enter the flaming pile. But those who, in direct defiance of the Shastrus, act the part of woman-murderers, in tying down the widow to the pile, and, subsequently applying the flame, burn her to death, can never exculpate themselves from the sin of woman-murder. As to the words you have quoted from the Skundu Pooran, signifying that the arguments of one who has no faith in Shivu and Vishnoo can have no weight in the discussion of the legality of facts, I reply,-—This Text is applicable to those who worship images. Those who worship forms under any name, and have no faith in Shivu and Vishnoo, their worship is vain, and their words to be disregarded. In the same way the words of the Koolarnuv : " He whose mouth does not give out the smell of wine and flesh, should perform a penance and be avoided, and is as an inferior animal. This is undoubted." These words are applicable only to those who follow the Tuntrus ; and if all such Texts are considered otherwise applicable than in relation to the sects to whom they are directed, there is no possibility of reconciling the variances betwixt the different Shastrus. The Shastru, treating of God, contains the following words : " Acts and rites that originate in movements of the hands, and other members of the body, being perishable, cannot effect beatitude that is eternal."

" Those that worship forms under appellations, continue

subjects to form and appellation ; for no perishable means can effect the acquisition of an imperishable end.

" That man who considers the Being that is infinite, incomprehensible, pure, extending as far as space, and time and vacuity, to be finite, perceptible by the senses, limited by time and place, subject to passion and anger, what crime is such a robber of Divine Majesty not guilty of ? " That is, he is guilty of those sins which are considered as the most heinous, as well as of those that are considered ordinary sins. Therefore the words of so sinful a person can have no weight in the discussion of the legality of rites.

SECTION VIII.

You have stated in p. 2, that in the same manner as when) part of a village or of a piece of cloth has been burnt, the village or piece of cloth is said *to* be burnt, so if a portion of the pile is inflamed, the whole pile may be said to be flaming. Therefore, it may with propriety be affirmed, that widows do in this country ascend the flaming pile.

I reply:—You may afford gratification to those who take delight in woman-murder by such a quibble, but how can you avoid divine punishment by thus playing upon words- ?—for we find in the Text of Hareet and of Vishnoo, the phrase " Pruvivesh hootasunum," which means *entering into flames*, an d the term " Sumaroheddhootasunum," signifying *ascending the flames*. You have interpreted these directions in this way;—that, a considerable distance from the pile, fire may be placed, and a piece of grass or rope may connect the fire with the pile ; and that thus, by ascending the pile, which has not been in the smallest degree affected by the fire, the widow may fulfill the direction of ascending and entering the flaming pile. But I beg to remark, that both in vulgar dialect and in Sungskrit, the word " Pruvesh " expresses only the introgression of one substance into another ; as for example, " Grihu pruvesh koriachhilam," *I entered the house ;* the word entered cannot be used unless I actually passed into the house. If a long bamboo be attached to the house and a rope be fastened to that bamboo, no one can in any language say, that in merely touching that rope or bamboo he has entered that house. If a single billet of wood belonging to the pile were indeed inflamed, then you might say, according to your quibble regarding the burning of the cloth and of the village, that the pile was inflamed, and the flaming pile entered ; but even this is by no means the case, in the mode in which your pile is used. Unless, however, the pile is so completely it?., nre that the flames may surround the whole of her body, the woman cannot be said to enter into flame. You must then,

before you can justify your murder of helpless women, prepare a new dictionary; but there is no great probability of its interpretations being adopted adopted by men of knowledge.

Towards the end of the 28th page you assert, that those who tie down the woman to the pile according to the custom of the country, are not guilty of violation of the Shastrus : for it is to be understood from the words of Hareet before quoted, that until her body be burnt, the widow cannot be delivered from female form, which implies that her body ought to be completely consumed ; and that it is on this account that those who burn her make her fast to the pile, lest by accident any part of the dead body should fall out of the pile, and fail of being consumed, and in that case the burning be incomplete. This practice of tying down, therefore, is also conformable to the Shastru ; and those who, in burning the woman, make her fast to the pile, are not therein guilty of any sin, but rather perform a pious act. In support of this assertion you have quoted the words of Apustumbu, signifying that he who performs an act prescribed by the Shastrus, or he who pursuades or permits another to perform a prescribed act, ascends to heaven ; and he who commits an act forbidden by the Shastru, or who pursuades or permits another to perform a prohibited action, sinks to hell.

I reply:—You mean to say, that it is not in order to avoid the danger of the widow's flying from the pile from fear of the flames, or from pain, that she is made fast—but merely, lest any fragments of the body should fall from the pile unburnt, that she is tied' down to the pile while alive. I ask, Is it with an iron chain that the woman is made fast, or with a common rope ? For by securing the body by means of iron, the danger of portions of it being scattered from the pile may undoubtedly be avoided. But if, on the contrary, the body is bound with a common rope, the rope will be consumed before life has altogether quitted the body, and the rope,

when so burned, can be of no use in retaining within the pile the members of the body. So far have Pundits been infatuated, in attempting to give the appearance of propriety to improper actions, that they have even attempted to make people believe, that a rope may remain unconsumed amidst a flaming fire, and prevent the members of a body from being dispersed from the pile. Men of sense may now judge of the truth of the reason to which you ascribe the practice of tying down widows. All people in the world are not blind, and those who will go and behold the mode in which you tie down women to the pile, will readily perceive the truth or falsehood of the motives you assign for the practice. A little reflection ought to have convinced you of the light in which such an argument must be viewed, even by those of your friends who have the smallest regard for truth. As for the Text you have quoted from Apustumbu, it might have, with more propriety, been cited by us, because it is established by that passage, that those who commit, persuade to, or permit an improper action, descend to hell; for those that are guilty of wilful woman-murder, by tying women down with ropes, and burning them to death, a practice unauthorized by the Shastrus, and considered as most heinous, and those who persuade or permit others to do so, are certainly obnoxious to the denunciation of Apustumbu. The pretext of custom of the country, or of the object of preventing portions of the body from being scattered, will not exculpate them.

You have written, in page 29, that those who, by the permission of the widow, increase the flames by throwing wood or straw on the pile, are meritorious: for he who without reward assists another in a pious act, is to be esteemed most meritorious. In confirmation, you have quoted an anecdote of the Mutshyu Pooran, that a goldsmith, by affording his gratuitous assistance in a pious act, obtained a great reward. To this I have already replied: for if those who voluntarily commit woman-murder, by tying down a

widow to the pile, and holding her down with bamboos to be burnt to death, are to be reckoned as performers of a pious act, those who assist them in so doing must be esteemed meritorious : but if this be a most heinous and debased crime, the promoters of it must certainly reap the fruits of woman-murder.

In your concluding paragraph you have quoted three Texts, to prove the continual observance of this practice during all ages. The first recounting, that a dove entered into the flaming pile of her deceased husband. The second, that when Dhriturashtru was burning in the flames of his hermitage, his wife, Gandharee, threw herself into the fire. The wives of Busoodev (the father of Krishnu), of Buluram, of Prudyoomnu, and of others, entered the flaming piles of their respective husbands. These three instances occurred, as narrated by the Pooran writers, within intervals of a few years towards the close of the Dwapur Yoog. You ought then to have quoted other instances, to shew the continual observance of this practice throughout all ages. Let that be as it may, you yourself cannot fail to know, that in former ages there were, as in later times, some who devoted themselves to the attainment of final beatitude, and others to the acquisition of future pleasure. Some too were virtuous, and some sinful; some believers, some sceptics. Amongst those, both men and women, who performed rites for reward, after enjoying pleasures in heaven, have again fallen *to* earth. Those Shastrus themselves declare this fact; but in the Shastrus that teach the path to final beatitude, the performance of rites for the sake of reward is positively forbidden. According to these Shastrus, numberless women, in all ages, who were desirous of final beatitude, by living as ascetics, attained their object. Evidence of this is to be found in the Muhabharut and other works : " The widows of the heroic *Kooroos,* who fell valiantly with their faces to the foe, and were translated to the heaven of Bruhma,

performed only the prescribed ceremonies with water," and did not burn themselves on the piles of their husbands. I have moreover to request your attention to the fact, that in the three instances you have quoted, the very words " entered into fire " are used. In those three cases, then, it appears that (the widows actually entered the flames, and therefore, whatever widow in the present time does not enter the fire, but is burnt to death by others tying her down to the pile, has not performed the ceremony according to the ancient practice you have instanced; and from rites so performed she cannot even be entitled to the temporary enjoyment of heavenly pleasures; and those who tie her down, and, pressing on her with bamboos, kill her, must, according to all Shastrus, be considered guilty of the heinous crime of woman-murder.

SECTION IX.

Advocate.—I ALLUDED, in p. 18, 1. 18, to the real reason for our anxiety to persuade widows to follow their husbands, and for our endeavours to burn them, pressed down with ropes : *viz.*, that women are by nature of inferior understanding, without resolution, unworthy of trust, subject to passions, and void of virtuous knowledge; they, according to the precepts of the Shastru, are not allowed to marry again after the demise of their husbands, and consequently despair at once of all worldly pleasure ; hence it is evident, that death to these unfortunate widows is preferable to existence; for the great difficulty which a widow may experience by living a purely ascetic life, as prescribed by the Shastrus, is obvious; therefore, if she do not perform Concremation, it is probable that she may be guilty of such acts as may bring disgrace upon her paternal and maternal relations, and those that may be connected with her husband. Under these circumstances, we instruct them from their early life in the idea of Concremation, holding out to them heavenly enjoyments in company with their husbands, as well as the beatitude of their relations, both by birth and marriage, and their reputation in this world. From this many of them, on the death of their husbands, become desirous of accompanying them ; but to remove every chance of their trying to escape from the blazing fire, in burning them we first tie them down to the pile.

Opponent.—The reason you have now assigned for burning widows alive is indeed your true motive, as we are well aware ; but the faults which you hare imputed to women are not planted in their constitution by nature; it would be, therefore, grossly criminal to condemn that sex to death merely from precaution. By ascribing to them all sorts of improper conduct, you have indeed successfully persuaded the Hindoo community to look down upon them as contemptible and mischievous creatures, whence they have been

subjected to constant miseries. I have, therefore, to offer a few remarks on this head.

Women are in general inferior to men in bodily strength and energy; consequently the male part of the community, taking advantage of their corporeal weakness, have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature, and afterwards they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. But if we give the subject consideration, we may easily ascertain whether or not your accusation against them is consistent with justice. As to their inferiority in point of understanding, when did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity? How then can you accuse them of want of understanding? If, after instruction in knowledge and wisdom, a person cannot comprehend or retain what has been taught him, we may consider him as deficient; but as you keep women generally void of education and acquirements, you cannot, therefore, in justice pronounce on their inferiority. On the contrary, Leelavutee, Bhanoomutee, (the wife of the prince of Kurnat), and that of Kalidas, are celebrated for their thorough knowledge of all the Shastrus: moreover in the Vrihudarunyuk Opunishud of the Ujoor Véd it is clearly stated, that Yagnuvulkyu imparted divine knowledge of the most difficult nature to his wife Muitreyee, who was able to follow and completely attain it!

Secondly.—You charge them with want of resolution, at which I feel exceedingly surprised: for we constantly perceive, in a country where the name of death makes the male shudder, that the female, from her firmness of mind, offers to burn with the corpse of her deceased husband; and yet you accuse those women of deficiency in point of resolution.

Thirdly.—With regard to their trustworthiness, let us look minutely into the conduct of both sexes, and we may be enabled to ascertain which of them is the most frequently guilty of betraying friends. If we enumerate such women

in each village or town as have been deceived by men, and such men, as have been betrayed by women, I presume that the number of the deceived women would be found ten times greater than that of the betrayed men. Men are, in general, able to read and write, and manage public affairs, by which means they easily promulgate such faults as women occasionally commit, but never consider as criminal the misconduct of men towards women. One fault they have, it must be acknowledged; which is, by considering others equally void of duplicity as themselves, to give their confidence too readily, from which they suffer much misery, even so far that some of them are misled to suffer themselves to be burnt to death.

In the fourth place, with respect to their subjection to the passions, this may be judged of by the custom of marriage as to the respective sexes; for one man may marry two or three, sometimes even ten wives and upwards; while a woman, who marries but one husband, desires at his death to follow him, forsaking all worldly enjoyments, or to remain leading the austere life of an ascetic.

Fifthly.—The accusation of their want of virtuous knowledge is an injustice. Observe what pain, what slighting, what contempt, and what afflictions their virtue enables them to support! How many Kooleen Brahmuns are there who marry ten or fifteen wives for the sake of money, that never see the greater number of them after the day of marriage, and visit others only three or four times in the course of their life. Still amongst those women, most, even without seeing or receiving any support from their husbands, living dependent on their fathers or brothers, and suffering much distress, continue to preserve their virtue; and when Brahmuns, or those of other tribes, bring their wives to live with them, what misery do the women not suffer? At marriage the wife is recognized as half of her husband, but in after-conduct they are treated worse than inferior animals.

For the women is employed to do the work of a slave in the house, such as, in her turn, to clean the place very early in the morning; whether cold or wet, to scour the dishes, to wash the floor, to cook night and day, to prepare and serve food for her husband, father-, and mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, and friends and connections ! (for amongst Hindoos more than in other tribes relations long reside together, and on this account quarrels are more common* amongst brothers respecting their worldly affairs.) If in the preparation or serving up of the victuals they commit the smallest fault, what insult do they not receive from their husband, their mother-in-law, and the younger brothers of their husband f After all the male part of the family have satisfied themselves, the women content themselves with what may be left, whether sufficient in quantity or not. Where Brahmuns or Kayustus are not wealthy, their women are obliged to attend to their cows, and to prepare the cow-dung for firing. In the afternoon they fetch water from the river or tank, and at night perform the office of menial servants in making the beds. In case of any fault or omission in the performance of those labours, they receive injurious treatment. Should the husband acquire wealth, he indulges in criminal amours to her perfect knowledge, and almost under her eyes, and does not see her perhaps once a month. As long as the husband is poor, she suffers every kind of trouble, and when he becomes rich she is altogether heart-broken. All this pain and affliction their virtue alone enables them to support. Where a husband takes two or three wives to live with him, they are subjected to mental miseries and constant quarrels. Even this distressed situation they virtuously endure. Sometimes it happens that the husband, from a preference f6r one of his wives, behaves cruelly to another. Amongst the lower classes, and those even of the better class who have not associated with good company, the wife, on the slightest fault, or even on bare suspicion of her misconduct, is chastised as a thief.

Respect to virtue and their reputation generally makes them forgive even this treatment. If, unable to bear such cruel usage, a wife leaves her husband's house to live separately from him, then the influence of the husband with the magisterial authority is generally sufficient to place her again in his hands; when, in revenge for her quitting him, he seizes every pretext to torment her in various ways, and sometimes even puts her privately to death. These are facts occurring every day, and not to be denied. What I lament is, that, seeing the women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion, that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death.

ABSTRACT

OF

THE ARGUMENTS

REGARDING

THE BURNING OF WIDOWS,

CONSIDERED AS A RELIGIOUS RITE.



CALCUTTA:

1830.

ABSTRACT

OF

THE ARGUMENTS, &C.

SEVERAL Essays, Tracts, and Letters, written in defence of or against the practice of burning Hindoo widows alive, have for some years past attracted the attention of the public. The arguments therein adduced by the parties being necessarily scattered, a complete view of the question cannot be easily attained by such readers as are precluded by their immediate avocations from bestowing much labour in acquiring information on the subject. Although the practice itself has now happily ceased to exist under the Government of Bengal,* nevertheless, it seems still desirable that the substance of those publications should be condensed in a concise but comprehensive manner, so that enquirers may, with little difficulty, be able to form a just conclusion, as to the true light in which this practice is viewed in the religion of Hindoos. I have, therefore, made an attempt to accomplish this object, hoping that the plan pursued may be found to answer this end.

The first point to be ascertained is, whether or not the practice of burning widows alive on the pile and with the corpse of their husbands, is imperatively enjoined by the Hindoo religion? To this question, even the staunch advocates for Concremation must reluctantly give a negative

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* The administration to which this distinguished merit is due, consisted of Lord W. C. Bentinck, Governor-Genera! ; Viscount Combermere, Commander-in-Chief; W. B. Bayley, Esq. ; and sir C. T, Metcalfe, Members of Council*

reply, and unavoidably concede the practice to the option of widows. This admission on their part is owing to two principal considerations, which it is now too late for them to feign to overlook. First, because Munoo in plain terms enjoins a widow to "*continue till death* forgiving all injuries, performing austere duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one only husband;" (Ch. v., ver. 158.) So Yagnuvulkyu inculcates the same doctrine: "A widow shall live under care of her father, mother, son, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or uncle; since, on the contrary, she shall be liable to reproach." (*Vide* Mitakshura, Ch. i.) Secondly, because an attempt on the part of the advocates for Concremation to hold out the act as an incumbent duty on widows, would necessarily bring a stigma upon the character of the living widows, who have preferred a virtuous life to Concremation, as charging them with a violation of the duty said to be indispensable. These advocates, therefore, feel deterred from giving undue praise to a few widows, choosing death on the pile, to the disgrace of a vast majority of that class preferring a virtuous life. And in consideration of these obvious circumstances, the celebrated Smarttu Rughoonundun, the latest commentator on Hindoo Law in Bengal, found himself compelled to expound the following passage of Ungira: "there is no other course for a widow beside Concremation;" as "conveying exaggerated praise of the adoption of that course."

The second point is, that in case the alternative be admitted, that a widow may either live a various life, or bum herself on the pile of her husband; it should next be determined, whether both practices are esteemed equally meritorius, or one be declared preferable to the other. To satisfy ourselves on this question, we should first refer to the Veds, whose authority is considered paramount; and we find

in them a passage most pointed and decisive against Concremation, declaring that " From a desire during life, of future fruition, life ought not to be destroyed." (*Vide* Mitakshura, Ch. i.) While the advocates of Concremation quote a passage from the Véds, of a very abstruse nature, in support of their position, which is as follows: " O fire, let these women, with bodies anointed with clarified butter, eyes coloured with collyrium and void of tears, enter thee, the parent of water,* that they may not be separated from their husbands, themselves sinless, and jewels amongst women." This passage (if genuine) does not, in the first place, enjoin widows to offer themselves as sacrifices. Secondly.—No allusion whatever is made in it to voluntary death by a widow *with the corpse of her husband.* Thirdly.—The phrase " These women " in the passage, literally implies women then present. Fourthly.—Some Commentators consider the passage as conveying an allegorical allusion to the constellations of the moon's path, which are invariably spoken of in Sungskrit in the feminine gender:—butter implying the milky path; collyrium meaning unoccupied space between one star and another; husbands signifying the more splendid of the heavenly bodies; and entering the fire, or, properly speaking, ascending it, indicating the rise of the constellations through the south-east horizon, considered as the abode of fire. Whatever may be the real purport of this passage, no one ever ventured to give it an interpretation as *commanding* widows to burn themselves on the pile and with the corpse of their husbands.

We next direct attention to the Smritee, as next in authority to the Véds. Munoo, whose authority supersedes that of other lawgivers, enjoins widows to live a virtuous life, as already quoted. Yagnuvulkyu and some others have adopted the same mode of exhortation. On the other hand,

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*** In Sungskrit writings, water is represented as originating in fire.**

Ungira recommends the practice of Concremation, saying: " That a woman who, on the death of her husband, *ascends the burning pile* with him, is exalted to heaven as equal to Uroondhooti." So Vyas says, " A pigeon devoted to her husband, after his death, *entered the flames*, and, ascending to heaven, she there found her husband." She who follows her husband to another world, shall dwell in a region of glory for so many years as there are hairs in the human body, or thirty-live millions." Vishnoo, the saint, lays down this rule, " After the death of her husband, a wife should live as an ascetic or ascend his pile." Hareet and others have followed Ungira in recommending Concremation.

The above quoted passages from Ungira and others, recommend Concremation on the part of widows, as means to obtain future carnal fruition; and, accordingly, previous to their ascent on the pile, all widows invariably and solemnly declare future fruition as their object in Concremation. But the Bhugvudgeeta, whose authority is considered the most sacred by Hindoos of all persuasions, repeatedly condemns rites performed for fruition. I here quote a few passages of that book. " All those ignorant persons who attach themselves to the words of the Shastrus that convey promises of fruition, consider those extravagant and alluring passages, as leading to real happiness; and say, besides them there is no other reality. Agitated in their minds by these desires, they believe the abodes of the celestial gods to be the chief object, and they devote themselves to those Texts which treat of ceremonies and their fruits, and entice by promises of enjoyment. Such people can have no real confidence in the Supreme Being." " Observers of rites, after the completion of their rewards, return to earth. Therefore they, for the sake of rewards, repeatedly ascend to heaven and return to the world, and cannot obtain eternal bliss."

Munoo repeats the same : " Whatever act is performed for the sake of gratification in this world or the next, is called

Pruvurtuk, as leading to the temporary enjoyment of the mansions of gods ; and those which are performed according to the knowledge respecting God are called Nivurtuk, as means to procure release from the five elements of this body; that is, they obtain eternal bliss."

The Author of the Mitakshura, a work which is considered as a standard of Hindoo Law throughout Hindoostan, referring on one hand to the authority of Munoo, Yagnuvulkyu, the Bhugvudgeeta, and similar sacred writings, and to the passages of Ungira, Hareet and Vyas on the other hand, and after having weighed both sides of the question, declares that " The widow who is not desirous of eternal beatitude, but who wishes only for a perishable and small degree of future fruition, is authorized to accompany her husband." So that the Smarttu Rughoonundun, the modern expounder of law in Bengal, classes Concremation among the rites holding out promises of fruition ; and this author thus inculcates: " Learned men should not endeavour to persuade the ignorant to perform rites holding out promises of fruition," Hence Concremation, in their opinion, is the least virtuous act that a widow can perform.*

* Hindoos are persuaded to believe that Vyas, considered as an inspired writer among the ancients, composed and left behind him numerous and voluminous works under different titles, as Muha-Poorans, Itihashes, Sunghitas, Smriti, etc., etc., to an extent that no man, during the ordinary course of life, could prepare. These, however, with a few exceptions, exist merely in name, and those that are genuine bear the commentaries of celebrated authors. So the Tuntrus, or works ascribed to Shivu as their author, are esteemed as consisting of innumerable millions of volumes, though only a very few, comparatively, are to be found. Debased characters among this unhappy people, taking advantage of this circumstance, have secretly composed forged works and passages, and published them as if they were genuine, with the view of introducing new doctrines, new rites, or new prescripts of secular law. Although they have frequently succeeded by these means in working on the minds of the ignorant, yet the learned have never

The third and the last point to be ascertained is, whether or not *the mode* of Concremation prescribed by Hareet and others was ever duly observed? The passages recommending Concremation, as quoted by these expounders of law, require that a widow, resolving to die after the demise of her husband, should *voluntarily ascend* and enter the flames † to destroy her existence;* allowing her, at the same time, an opportunity of retracting her resolution, should her courage fail from the alarming sight or effect of the flames, and of returning to her relatives, performing a penance for abandoning the sacrifice, or bestowing the value of a cow on a Brahmun. Hence, as *voluntarily ascending* upon and *entering into the jlatnes,* are described as indispensably necessary for a widow in the performance of this rite, the violation of one of these provisions renders the act mere suicide, and implicates, in the guilt of female murder, those that assist in its perpetration, even according to the above quoted authorities, which are themselves of an inferior order. But no one will venture to

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admitted the authority of any passage or work alleged to be sacred, unless it has been quoted or expounded by one of the acknowledged and authoritative Commentators. It is now unhappily reported, that some advocates for the destruction of widows, finding their cause unsupported by the passages cited by the author of the Mitakshura, by the Smarttu Rughoonundun, or by other expounders of Hindoo Law, have disgracefully adopted the trick of coining passages in the name of the Poorans or Tuntrus ; conveying doctrines not only directly opposed to the decisive expositions of these celebrated teachers of law, but also evidently at variance with the purport of the genuine sacred passage* which they have quoted. The passages thus forged are said to be calculated to give a preference to Concremation over virtuous life. I regret to understand that some persons belonging to the party opposing this practice, are reported to have had recourse to the same unworthy artifice, under the erroneous plea that stratagem justifies stratagem.

*** Ungira,**

†Vyas.

assert, that the provisions, prescribed in the passages adduced, have ever been observed ; that is, no widow ever voluntarily *ascended* on and *entered* into *the flames* in the fulfilment of this rite. The advocates for Concremation have been consequently driven to the necessity of taking refuge in *usage*, as justifying both suicide and female murder, the most heinous of crimes.

We should not omit the present opportunity of offering up thanks to Heaven, whose protecting arm has rescued our weaker sex from cruel murder, under the cloak of religion ; and our character, as a people, from the contempt and pity with which it has been regarded, on account of this custom, by all civilized nations on the surface of the globe.

BRIEF REMARKS

REGARDING

MODERN ENCROACHMENTS

ON THE

ANCIENT RIGHTS OF FEMALES,

ACCORDING TO

THE HINDOO LAW OF INHERITANCE.

CALCUTTA:

1822.

PREFACE BY HIS SON.

AT *this* moment, when thousands of my countrymen have openly come forward to invoke the assistance of the Legislature to suppress the abominations of Kulin Polygamy, I have deemed it proper to re-print the following small Tract, published by the late Rajah Rammohun Roy in 1822, Those, who have joined in the application *to* the Legislative body, will have the satisfaction to see that my revered father, so far back as 1822, entertained sentiments on the subject of Kulin Polygamy similar to those which have now moved them to act in a way so independent of their prejudices, and so well fitted to confer incalculable benefits on the Hindu Community.

CALCUTTA,
July 12, 1856.

RUMAPRUSAD ROY.

BRIEF REMARKS
REGARDING
MODERN ENCROACHMENTS
ON THE
ANCIENT RIGHTS OF FEMALES.

WITH a view to enable the public to form an idea of the state of civilization throughout the greater part of the empire of Hindoostan in ancient days,* and of the subsequent gradual degradation introduced into its social and political constitution by arbitrary authorities, I am induced to give as an

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* At an early age of civilization, when the division into castes was first introduced among the inhabitants of India, the second tribe, who were appointed to defend and rule the country, having adopted arbitrary and despotic practices, the others revolted against them ; and under the personal command of the celebrated Purusooram, defeated the Royalists in several battles, and put cruelly to death almost all the males of that tribe. It was at last resolved that the legislative authority should be confined to the first class who could have no share in the actual government of the state, or in managing the revenue of the country under any pretence ; while the second tribe should exercise the executive authority. The consequence was, that India enjoyed peace and harmony for a great many centuries. The Brahmuns having no expectation of holding an office, or of partaking of any kind of political promotion, devoted their time to scientific pursuits and religious austerity, and lived in poverty. Freely associating with all the other tribes, they were thus able to know their sentiments and to appreciate the justness of their complaints, and thereby to lay down such rules as were required, which often induced them to rectify the abuses that were practised by the second tribe. But after the expiration of more than two thousand years, an absolute form of government came gradually again to prevail. The first class having Been induced to accept employments in political departments, became entirely dependent on the second tribe, and so unimportant in themselves, that they were obliged to explain away the laws enacted by their

instance, the interest and care which our ancient legislators took in the promotion of the comfort of the female part of the community, and to compare the laws of female inheritance which they enacted, and which afforded that sex the opportunity of enjoyment of life, with that which moderns and our cotemporaries have gradually introduced and established, to their complete privation, directly or indirectly, of most of those objects that render life agreeable.

All the ancient lawgivers unanimously award to a mother an equal share with her son in the property left by her deceased husband, in order that she may spend her remaining days independently of her children ; as is evident from the following passages :

YAGNUVULKYU.—" After the death of a father, let a mother also inherit an equal share with her sons in the division of the property *left by their father."*

KATYAYUNU.—" The father being dead, the mother should inherit an equal share with the son."

NARUDU.—" After the death of a husband, a mother should receive a share equal to that of each of his sons."

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forefathers, and to institute new rules according to the dictates of their cotemporary princes. They were considered as merely nominal legislators, and the whole power, whether legislative or executive, was in fact exercised by the Rajpoots. This tribe exercised tyranny and oppression for a period of about a thousand years, when Moosulmans from Ghuznee and Ghore, invaded the country, and finding it divided among hundreds of petty princes, detested by their respective subjects, conquered them all successively, and introduced their own tyrannical system of government, destroying temples, universities, and all other sacred and literary establishments. At present the whole empire (with the exception of a few provinces) has been placed under the British power; and some advantages have already been derived from the prudent management of its rules, from whose general character a hope of future quiet and happiness is justly entertained. The succeeding generation will, however, be more adequate to pronounce on the real advantages of this government.

VISHNOO, *the Legislator.* " Mothers should be receivers of shares according to the portion allowed to the sons."

VRIHUSPUTI.—" After his (the father's) death, a mother, the parent of his sons, should be entitled to an equal share with his sons ; their step-mothers also to equal shares ; but daughters to a fourth part of the shares of the sons."

VYAS.—-" The wives of a father by whom he has no male issue, are considered as entitled to equal shares with his Sons, and all the grand-mothers *(including the mothers and step-mothers of the father J,* are said to be entitled as mothers."

This Mooni seems to have made this express declaration of the rights of step-mothers, omitting those of mothers, under the idea that the latter were already sufficiently established by the direct authority of preceding lawgivers.

We come to the moderns.

The author of the Dayubhagu and the writer of the Dayututwu, the modern expounders of Hindoo law (whose opinions are considered by the natives of Bengal as standard authority in the division of property among heirs) have thus limited the rights allowed to widows by the above ancient legislators. When a person is willing to divide his property among his heirs during his life time, he should entitle only those wives by whom he has no issue to an equal share with his sons; but if he omit such a division, those wives can have no claim to the property he leaves. These two modern expounders lay stress upon a passage of Yagnuvulkyu, which requires a father to allot equal shares to his wives, in case he divides his property during his life; whereby they connect the term " of a father," in the above quoted passage of Vyas, *viz.,* "the wives of a father, etc.," with the term "division" understood; that is, the wives by whom he has no son, are considered in the division made by a father, as entitled to e:jual shares with his sons ; and that when sons **may divide**

property among themselves after the demise of their father, they should give an equal share to their mother only, neglecting step-mothers in the division. Here the expounders did not take into their consideration any proper provision for step-mothers, who have naturally less hope of support from their step-sons than mothers can expect from their own children.

In the opinion of these expounders, even a mother of a single son should not be entitled to any share. The whole property should, in that case, devolve on the son ; and in case that son should die after his succession to the property, his son or wife should inherit it. The mother in that case, should be left totally dependent on her son or on her son's wife. Besides, according to the opinion of these expounders, if more than one son should survive, they can deprive their mother of her title, by continuing to live as a joint family (which has been often the case,) as the right of a mother depends, as they say, on division, which depends on the will of the sons.

Some of our cotemporaries (whose opinion is received as a verdict by Judicial Courts) have still further reduced the right of a mother to almost nothing; declaring, as I understand, that if a person die, leaving a widow and a son or sons, and also one or more grandsons, whose father is not alive, the property so left is to be divided among his sons and his grandsons ; his widow in this case being entitled to no share in the property; though she might have claimed an equal share, had a division taken place among those surviving sons and the father of the grandson while he was alive.* They are said to have founded their opinion on the above passage,

* This exposition has been (1 am told) set aside by the Supreme Court, in consequence of the Judges having prudently applied for the opinions of other Pundits, which turned out to be at variance with those of the majority of tie regular advisers of the Court in points of Hindoo Law.

entitling a widow to a share when property is to be divided among *sons.*

In short, a widow, according to the expositions of the law, can receive nothing when her husband has no issue by her; and in a case he dies leaving only one son by his wife, or having had more sons, one of whom happened to die leaving issue, she shall, in these cases, also have no claim to the property; and again, should any one leave more than one surviving son, and they, being unwilling to allow a share to the widow, keep the property undivided, the mother can claim nothing in this instance also. But when a person dies, leaving two or more sons, and all of them survive and be inclined to allot a share to their mother, her right is in this case only valid. Under these expositions, and with such limitations, both step-mothers and mothers have, in reality, been left destitute in the division of their husband's property, and the right of a widow exists in theory only among the learned, but unknown to the populace.

The consequence is, that a woman who is looked up to as the sole mistress by the rest of a family one day, on the next becomes dependent on her sons, and subject to the slights of her daughters-in-law. She is not authorized to expend the most trifling sum, or dispose of an article of the least value, without the consent of her son or daughter-in-law, who were all subject to her authority but the day before. Cruel sons often wound the feelings of their dependent mothers, deciding in favour of their own wives, when family disputes take place between their mothers and wives. Step-mothers, who often are numerous on account of polygamy being allowed in these countries, are still more shamefully neglected, in general, by their step-sons, and sometimes dreadfully treated by their sisters-in-law who have fortunately a son or sons by their husband.

It is not from religious prejudices and early impressions only, that Hindoo widows burn themselves on the piles of

their deceased husbands, but also from their witnessing the distress in which widows of the same rank in life are involved, and the insults and slights to which they are daily subjected, that they become in a great measure regardless of existence after the death of their husbands : and this indifference, accompanied with the hope of future reward held out to them, leads them to the horrible act of suicide. These restraints on female inheritance encourage, in a great degree, polygamy, a frequent source of the greatest misery in native families ; a grand object of Hindoos being to secure a provision for their male offspring, the law, which relieves them from the necessity of giving an equal portion to their wives, removes a principal restraint on the indulgence of their inclinations in respect to the number they marry. Some of them, especially Brahmuns of higher birth, marry ten, twenty, or thirty women,* either for some small consideration, or merely to gratify their brutal inclinations, leaving a great many of them, both during their life-time and after death, to the mercy of their own paternal relations. The evil consequences arising from such polygamy, the public may easily guess, from the nature of the fact itself, without my being reduced to the mortification of particularising those which are known by the native public to be of daily occurrence.

To these women there are left only three modes of conduct to pursue after the death of their husbands. 1st.—To live a miserable life as entire slaves to others, without indulging any hope of support from another husband. 2ndly.—To walk in the paths of unrighteousness for their maintenance and independence. 3rdly.—To die on the funeral pile of

* The horror of this practice is so painful to the natural feelings of man, that even Madhub Singh, the late Rajah of Tirhoot, (though a Brahmun himself), through compassion, took upon himself (I am told) within the last half century, to limit Brahmuns of his estate to four wives only.

their husbands, loaded with the applause and honour of their neighbours. It cannot pass unnoticed by those who are acquainted with the state of society in India, that the number of female suicides in the single province of Bengal, when compared with those of any other British provinces, is almost ten to one; we may safely attribute this disproportion chiefly to the greater frequency of a plurality of wives among the natives of Bengal, and to their total neglect in providing for the maintenance of their females.

This horrible polygamy among Brahmuns is directly contrary to the law given by ancient authors; for Yagnuvulkyu authorizes second marriges, while the first wife is alive, only under eight circumstances :—ist.—The vice of drinking spirituous liquors. 2ndly.—Incurable sickness. 3rdly.—Deception. 4thly,—Barrenness. 5thly.—Extravagance. 6thly.—The frequent use offensive language. 7thly.—Producing only female offspring. Or, 8thly.—Manifestation of hatred towards her husband.

Munoo, Ch. ix. v. 80th. " A wife who drinks any spirituous liquors, who acts immorally, who shows hatred *to her lord,* who is *incurably diseased,* who is mischievous, who wastes his property, may at all times be superseded by another wife."

81 st.—" A barren wife may be superseded by another in the eighth year; she, whose children are all dead, in the tenth; she, Who is brings forth *only* daughters, in the, eleventh ; she, who is accustomed to speak unkindly, without delay."

82nd. " But she, who, though afflicted with illness, is beloved and virtuous, must never be disgraced, though she may be superseded by another wife with her own consent."

Had a Magistrate or other public officer been authorized by the rulers of the empire to receive applications for his sanction to a second marriage during the life of a first wife, and to grant his consent, only on such accusations as the

foregoing being substantiated, the above Law might have been rendered effectual, and the distress of the female sex in Bengal, and the number of suicides, would have been necessarily very much reduced.

According to the following ancient authorities, a daughter is entitled to one-fourth part of the portion which a son can inherit.

VRIHUSPUTI.—"The daughters should have the fourth part of the portion to *which the sons are entitled."*

VISHNOO.—" The rights of unmarried daughters shall be proportioned according to the shares allotted to the sons."

MUNOO, Ch. ix., v. 118th.—"To the unmarried daughters let their brothers give portions out of their own allotments respectively. Let each give a fourth part of his own distinct share, and they who feel disinclined to give this shall be condemned."

YAGNUVULKYU.—" Let such brothers as are already purified by the essential rites of life, purify, by the performance of those rites, the brothers that are left *by their late father*; unpurified ; let them also purify the sisters by giving them a fourth part of their own portion."

KATYAYUNU.—" A fourth part is declared to be the share of unmarried daughters, and three-fourths of the sons; if the fourth part of the property is *so* small *as to be inadequate to defray the expenses attending their marriage, the sons have an exclusive* right to the property, *but shall defray the marriage ceremony of the sisters.*" But the commentator on the Dayubhagu sets aside the right of the daughters, declaring that they are not entitled to any share in the property left by their fathers, but that the expenses attending their marriage should be defrayed by the brothers. He founds his opinion on the foregoing passage of Munoo, and that of Yagnuvulkyu, which, as he thinks, imply mere donation on the part of the brothers from their own portions, for the discharge of the expenses of marriage.

In the practice of our cotemporaries, a daughter or a sister is often a source of emolument to the Brahmuns of less respectable caste, (who are most numerous in Bengal), and to the Kayusths of high caste: these, so far from spending money on the marriage of their daughters or sisters, receive frequently considerable sums, and generally bestow them in marriage on those who can pay most.* Such Brahmuns and Kayusths, I regret to say, frequently marry their female relations to men having natural defects, or worn-out by old age or disease, merely from pecuniary considerations; whereby they either bring widowhood upon them soon after marriage, or render their lives miserable. They not only degrade themselves by such cruel and unmanly conduct, but violate entirely express authorities of Munoo and all other ancient law-givers; a few of which I here quote.

MUNOO, Ch iii, ver, 51st.—" Let no father, who knows the Law, receive a gratuity, however small, for giving his daughter in. marriage; since the man who, through avarice, takes a gracu.it *for that purpose,* is a seller of his offspring."

Ch, ix., ver. 98th.—" But even a man of the servile class ought not to receive a gratuity when he gives his daughter in marriage; since a father who takes a fee *on that occasiofi,* tacitly sells his daughter."

Ver. 100th.—" Nor, even in former births, have we heard the *virtuous approve* the tacit sale of a daughter for a price, under the name of nuptial gratuity."

KASHYUPU.—"Those who, infatuated by avarice, give their own daughters in marriage, for the sake of a gratuity, are the sellers of their daughters, the images of sin, and the perpetrators of a heinous iniquity."

*** Rajah Krissenchundru, the great-grandfather of the present ex-Rajah of Nudia) prevented this cruel practice of the sale of daughters and sisters throughout his estate.**

Both common sense, and the law of the land, designaze such a practice as an actual sale of females ; and the humane and liberal among Hindoos lament its existence, as well as the annihilation of female rights in respect of inheritance introduced by modern expounders. They, however, trust, that the humane attention of Government will be directed to those evils which are chief sources of vice and misery, and even of suicide among women; and to this they are encouraged to look forward by what has already been done in modifying, in criminal cases, some parts of the law enacted by Mohummudan Legislators, to the happy prevention of many cruel practices formerly established.

How distressing, it must be to the female community, and to those who interest themselves in their behalf, to observe daily that several daughters in a rich family can prefer no claim to any portion of the property, whether real or personal, left by their deceased father, if a single brother be alive ; while they (if belonging to a Kooleen family or Brah.nun of higher rank) are exposed to be given in marriage to individuals who have already several wives and have no means of maintaining them. Should a widow or a daughter wish to secure her right of maintenance, however limited, by having recourse to Law, the learned Brahmuns, whether holding public situations in the courts or not, generally divide into two parties, one advocating the cause of those females, and the other that of their adversaries. Sometimes in these or other matters respecting the Law, if the object contended for be important, the whole community seems to be agitated by the exertions of the paties and of their respective friends, in claiming the verdict of the law against each other. In general, however, a consideration of difficulties attending a law-suit, which a native woman, particularly a widow, is hardly capable of surmounting, induces her to forego her right; and if she continue virtuous, she is obliged to live in

a miserable state of dependence, destitute of all the comforts of life ; it too often happens, however, that she is driven by constant unhappiness to seek refuge in vice.

At the time of the decennial settlement in the year 1793, there were, among European gentlemen, so very few acquainted with Sungscrit and Hindoo Law, that it would have been hardly possible to have formed a committee of European oriental scholars and learned Brahmuns, capable of deciding on points of Hindoo Law. It was, therefore, highly judicious in Government, to appoint Pundits in the different Zillah Courts of Appeal, to facilitate the proceedings of Judges in regard to such subjects: but as we can now fortunately find many European gentlemen, capable of investigating legal questions, with but little assistance from learned Natives, how happy would it be for the Hindoo community, both male and female, were they to enjoy the benefits of the opinion of such gentlemen, when disputes arise, particularly on matters of inheritance.

Lost any one should infer from what I have stated, that I mean to impeach, universally, the character of the great body of last ned Hindoos, I declare, positively, that this is far from my intention : I only maintain, that the Native community place greater confidence in the honest judgment of the generality of European gentlemen, that in that of their own countrymen. But, should the Natives receive the same advantages of education that Europeans generally enjoy, and be brought up in the same notions of honour, they will, I trust, be found, equally with Europeans, worthy of the confidence of their countrymen, and the respect of all men.

THE END.